Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

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OAG: 11 appeals pending before CSC. PAGE 2
Salvation Army to resume Thanksgiving feast. PAGE 3

OPERATION CHRISTMAS DROP 2023

Pacific Air Forces preparing to deliver humanitarian assistance

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. KYLE JOHNSON
Low-Cost, Low-Altitude bundles fall to a Micronesian island as part of Operation Christmas Drop 2019, Dec. 11, 2019. OCD is a quadrilateral training mission designed to give C-130 crews from the U.S. Air Force, Japanese Air Self-Defense Force, Royal Australian Air Force, and Royal New Zealand Air Force a chance to air-drop supplies on unsurveyed drop zones throughout the Pacific.

The spirit of giving takes to the skies on Dec. 3 from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, as the U.S. Air Force and partner nations prepare for Operation Christmas Drop 2023. This annual humanitarian mission will, once again, bring essential supplies to remote

See PACIFIC on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's Imperial Pacific Resort in Garapan.

Yumul: No such thing as IPI $1M security deposit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Howyo Chi, the new manager/director of Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC, has disclosed that IPI just recently learned that a security deposit of $1 million related to IPI's casino/hotel project in Garapan had been given to the Department of Public Works, but DPW denied receiving such a deposit.

In a letter to DPW Secretary Ray N. Yumul dated Nov. 7, 2023, Chi said they

See YUMUL on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Surveillance footage of the Da'Ok Academy break-in last Nov. 10.

School break-ins still under investigation

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Public Safety continues to investigate the burglaries at both the Da'Ok Academy and the Koblerville Elementary School nearly a week ago.

DPS spokesperson Fred Sato said the Da'Ok Academy and KES break-ins remain open cases as DPS continues to look into leads provided by members of the

See SCHOOL on Page 4

DOC makes Konfitma debut

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Corrections has made its Konfitma debut by participating this year for the first time by using the Saipan prison as a staging area for one of the exercise's training scenarios.

During the last day of the Konfitma 2023 exercise that wrapped up yesterday, a hostage-taking setup was staged at the Department of

See DOC on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Department of Corrections and Department of Public Safety officers work together to diffuse a hostage-taking incident as part of Konfitma 2023 training exercise.

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
To wrap up the Konfitma 2023 exercise, first responders from various government agencies pose for a photo outside the Vicente Taman Seman building/Department of Corrections facility.

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car has a new general manager after the promotion of Mary Grace Bautista last Sept. 29.
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WORLD
The Israeli military raided Gaza's largest hospital early Wednesday, conducting what it called a targeted operation against Hamas.
PAGE 13

LIFE & STYLE
The BBC said two more people have come forward to complain about Russell Brand since the broadcaster launched a review into the actor and comedian's behavior.
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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

OAG: 11 appeals pending before CSC

» CSC's docket of appeals likely to expand, says OAG

» OAG: CSC abdicating its duty to hold hearings due to lack of hearing officer is not advisable

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

At least 11 administrative cases on appeals are pending before the Civil Service Commission and CSC's docket is likely to expand through the fiscal year, according to the Office of the Attorney General.

Tenorio

Deputy attorney general Lillian A. Tenorio informed CSC chair Raymond M. Muña last Nov. 8 that because the commission has more than a quorum to meet and conduct business, including administrative hearings on matters on appeal, abdicating that responsibility is not advisable.

Tenorio's advice was in response to Muña's Oct. 27, 2023, letter requesting guidance from the OAG on the lack of funding to hire an administrative officer.

Tenorio said that abdicating such a responsibility would be tantamount to a judge declining to hear any cases because he has no law clerk, or the AG refusing to file criminal cases because of the lack of funding to hire an adequate number of prosecutors.

She pointed out that there is both a policy and legal reason for assigning appeals to the commission before cases are brought to the Superior Court.

The deputy AG said the appeal process in the Commonwealth Code gives the commission the right to review the decisions of the Office of Personnel Management and affected department or agency and interpret its own regulations.

The commission should not relinquish this important responsibility by relying on the formalized process of the court to adjudicate disputes involving the civil service system, Tenorio said.

She said the commission would be violating the statute.

The deputy AG said she is aware of only one circumstance in which is a member of the commission issued a similar order that allowed the aggrieved employee to petition for judicial review.

That occurred, Tenorio said, because the commis-

See OAG on Page 4

'Of $9.5M IPI paid NMI gov't, how much is owed SNILD?'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Of the $9.5 million annual license fees paid by Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC and subsequently appropriated for numerous projects on Saipan, how much does the central government owe the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation?

That is the question that Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) raised at the SNILD's session yesterday, saying she previously asked that same question in prior leadership meetings but has yet to obtain a response.

DeLeon Guerrero

DeLeon Guerrero said she understands that they just passed a number of House local bills, but she restated her request for SNILD to revisit Saipan Local Law 20-26 where most of these fundings are coming from when they do legislations for reappropriation.

In November 2018, then-governor Ralph DLG Torres signed House Local Bill 20-81, S1, D4, into Saipan Local Law 20-26, which appropriates $9.5 million from IPI's exclusive gaming annual license fees allotted to Saipan and Northern Islands.

DeLeon Guerrero requested SNILD chair Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (Ind-Saipan) to seek information from Finance Secretary Tracy B. Norita exactly how much the central government owes the SNILD.

"And also…perhaps maybe we could provide more information on what particular projects were being funded prior to reappropriation of existing or current bills that we are addressing and which also passed today and in prior sessions," DeLeon Guerrero said.

She said this is very important because they need to go back in time and see what prevented the completion of certain projects that were funded under Saipan Local law 20-26.

She said she wants to make sure that community projects are not falling behind, and that they don't have to be constantly going through reappropriation of legislations and putting those prior projects again in the books.

"So that is my concern, and hopefully, we can get some more updated information regarding this particular funding account," the Senate president said.

Sablan said he would follow up with Norita.

DeLeon Guerrero later told Saipan Tribune that she has been asking in previous SNILD leadership meetings for an accounting of these funds—which to her understanding the central government had borrowed by from SNILD. She said how much has been paid back is unclear.

The Senate president said they have been re-appropriating funds from this source and from corresponding "business units."

"The concern I have is to also find out what these business units are…and whether prior funded projects within these business units are affected and if so how/why," she said.

DeLeon Guerrero said SNILD-funded projects have a significant impact in improving the municipality, hence the need to get their financial inquiry validated so they know as a delegation where they stand with this funding source.

Under Saipan Local Law 20-26, $9.5 million is appropriated for many projects for the Mayor of Saipan, Legislature, five precincts on Saipan, and other agencies.

Salvation Army to resume Thanksgiving feast

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

After the COVID-19 pandemic halted their annual Thanksgiving feast, The Salvation Army announced yesterday that they would be resuming the tradition this Thanksgiving and will be serving 500 to 600 meals on Nov. 23.

Gillespie

"After several years of having to cancel or reorganize the event due to approaching typhoons, COVID-19, and other factors, we are bringing back this event and we invite everyone to come by and have Thanksgiving dinner with us," said pastor Wayne Gillespie of The Salvation Army.

The event will be held at the Garapan Central Park across the Office of Aging in Garapan, where the meals will be served and distributed from 11am to 2pm.

Gillespie said they did a mobile distribution of meals last year, but this year they are excited to come together and resume serving traditional Thanksgiving fare, as well as full on entertainment, and games for every community member gathered to enjoy.

While the announcement was officially made at the Rotary Club of Saipan last Tuesday, the club's sergeant-at arms, Curtis Dancoe, shared his experience of joining the event with his family and that the spirit of giving was genuinely felt.

"…Taking care of hunger on Thanksgiving Day…is kind of a powerful thing to do once a year and to bring your family down and be a part of it is a good learning opportunity." said Dancoe "It's a pretty moving experience because you're in touch with community members. People in the community just come out, and you feel the sense of gratitude..."

Gillespie said those who want to volunteer are welcome, as there's always a job to do.

With the Christmas holidays drawing closer, the event would also kick off the start of The Salvation Army's Red Kettle Season

"We will also have a red kettle setup at this event and it will also mark the official opening of our Red Kettle Season," said pastor Annie Gillespie. She invites the community to come. "We hope you can join us."

For more information, call pastor Wayne Gillespie at (670) 483-0885.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Birthday greeting go out to Precy Mejia. Greeting from your Himawari family.

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2016 NISSAN 370Z
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STOCK #	YEAR	MODEL	SALE PRICE	PER PAYCHECK
22H127B	2015	MAZDA 3i	$10,995	$136
22M240A	2016	KIA SPORTAGE SUV	$13,995	$101
16P433	2016	HYUNDAI ELANTRA SEDAN	$13,995	$101
14P342B	2016	TOYOTA COROLLA SEDAN	$14,995	$106
23HS038	2019	MAZDA 3 SEDAN	$14,995	$120
14P396A	2017	HYUNDAI TUCSON	$14,995	$109
23D024C	2004	NISSAN TITAN SE	$14,995	$189
23RUS20	2016	MAZDA6 SEDAN	$14,995	$107
23H072A	2018	HYUNDAI ELANTRA SEDAN	$14,995	$104
22M075A	2015	HYUNDAI GENESIS SEDAN	$14,995	$186

STOCK #	YEAR	MODEL	SALE PRICE	PER PAYCHECK
18P405	2018	HYUNDAI ELANTRA SEDAN	$15,995	$111
16P446	2016	MAZDA3 SEDAN	$16,995	$121
23HS031	2020	HYUNDAI ELANTRA SEDAN SE	$16,995	$134
~~23RNS24~~	~~2022~~	~~MITSUBISHI MIR~~ SOLD ~~AN~~	~~$16,995~~	~~$114~~
16P463	2016	MAZDA6 SEDAN	$17,995	$128
18P416	2018	TOYOTA RAV4	$18,995	$151
23DMS07	2016	HYUNDAI SANTA FE SUV	$18,995	$135
22RU002	2018	KIA OPTIMA	$19,995	$139
19P488	2019	TOYOTA COROLLA SEDAN	$21,995	$146
22H187A	2021	HYUNDAI ELANTRA SEDAN NL	$24,995	$171

2018 KIA FORTE5 LX FWD
SALE PRICE $12,995 | $90 PER PAYCHECK STK: 19HS1006A
2020 MAZDA CX-3
SALE PRICE $17,995 | $123 PER PAYCHECK STK: 20P503
2017 MAZDA MIATA COUPE CLUB
SALE PRICE $18,995 | $134 PER PAYCHECK STK: 18P486A

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Pave Your Way to Guam Community College

Guam Community College's Department of Business and Visual Communications will host the 3rd Annual Pave Your Way, an opportunity for high school seniors and juniors to learn more about the Business and Visual Communications programs GCC offers. The two-day event will be held in the Multi-Purpose Auditorium (Bldg. 300) on

■ Tuesday, Nov. 21, 8am-4pm

■ Wednesday, Nov. 22, 9am-1 pm.

Students will be immersed with students and faculty in the Visual Communications, Marketing, Accounting, and Supervision & Management programs, the Pave Your Way team is working to ensure students have access to education opportunities and resources for a successful and stable transition to GCC. Pave Your Way Open House will showcase:

■ Business and Visual Communications Campus Clubs

■ Student Art Gallery and Studio

■ Show & Sell Student Bazaar

■ Campus Tours

■ GCC Admissions, Reach for College and Financial Aid

For more information on this event, please contact student event coordinator Teresa Cruz at teresa.cruz2@guamcc.edu or Event Co-chair Nita Cepeda at nitajeannette.cepeda@guamcc.edu. ***(GCC)***

Rota power interruption rescheduled to Sunday

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the general public of a revised schedule for the power service interruption on the island of Rota.

Initially set for Saturday, Nov. 18, 2023, it has been rescheduled to Sunday, Nov. 19, 2023, as CUC continues its ongoing system maintenance.

The power service interruption on Sunday will still be from 7:30am to 3:30pm.

Areas affected Feeders 1, 2, and 3 and no water wells are affected.

The purpose of the scheduled power service interruption is to allow CUC maintenance staff to perform inspections and services on the Mitsui generator.

CUC appreciates the public's cooperation and understanding as we continue to provide reliable service to our customers.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor its Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation). ***(CUC)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

MIFICPA Mini Games on Nov. 25

Marianas Institute of Filipino CPA and Accountants will hold its 2023 Mini Games on Nov. 25.

The first 100 to show up in the venue will receive a free event T-shiry.

"Let's all exercise, unwind, and enjoy together," MIFICPA stated in a statement.

Please access below link to register! https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdooUCYoUP3F-p8W0dAPsGK9kFIWzH-cm_uNSjisvomg-WTPHdg/viewform?fbclid=IwAR0F28YzUp-gksDzAzUY3URkzpS-7juon6Xyjbi7nMssupe-1Zaz6GZlQI_X_k

For more information, please contact Marvin Buston via email mibuston86@gmail.com. ***(PR)***

Monika's Treasures soft opening tomorrow

Monika's Treasures will hold its soft-opening launch tomorrow, Nov. 17, from 12pm to 8pm.

All customers get a storewide discount on this day only. It's also a geat opportunity to start your Christmas shopping.

Monika's Treasures is located next to Joeten Shopping Center, Garapan across DFS Galleria.

Join us for refreshments and share with all your friends. For more information, call (670) 233 4403. ***(PR)***

Youth theater to stage 'Property Rites' on Nov. 17-18

The Friends of the Arts is dedicating its 2023-2024 season to young people across the CNMI, starting with a production centered on the issue of artificial intelligence. Entrance is free.

The Friends of the Arts Youth Theatre will be staging the production Property Rites this Friday and Saturday, Nov. 17 and 18, starting at 7pm at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center.

"Come and enjoy the show and the talent of our youth. There is no charge for admission. Contributions for our youth theater will be accepted and appreciated," said the Friends of the Arts in a mass email yesterday.

According to the FOA email, the production takes place in an art studio that has invested millions in a high-tech work of art—15 human figure sculptures programmed to perform thousands of movements, monologues, dialogues, and more. But just when the owner is about to sell a sculpture, it "malfunctions"; the figures are "alive."

"As each one struggles to achieve autonomy, they begin a fatal race against their desperate owner's destructive plan. [This play is] an interesting look at the AI issue from both sides," states the FOA email.

This production is just the start of the youth theater's 2023-2024 season. Next up will be a collection of short plays referred to as The 10 Minute Plays in February, which will be a production of the FOA Youth Theatre in conjunction with the FOA Community Performers.

"We will then be honored by the annual visit in March by classical pianist, Roman Rudnytsky who will share his talents with the youth of our islands by visiting schools for performances and workshops," states the FOA.

The last production in this youth-oriented series of productions will be an FOA Youth Theatre production of a Broadway musical from the Music Theatre International series of Musicals "Broadway Junior." ***(Saipan Tribune)***

PACIFIC

From page 1

communities in the Pacific.

Operation Christmas Drop, which dates back to 1952, symbolizes the U.S. commitment to partners in the Indo-Pacific and is a testament to the Air Force's enduring dedication to humanitarian assistance.

Each year the mission reaches remote islands across the Pacific, locations in the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau.

Col. Andrew Roddan, 374th Airlift Wing commander at Yokota Air Base, Japan, reaffirmed the importance of the operation and the commitment of Airmen participating in OCD23.

"Our Pacific Air Forces airmen continue to build critical interoperability with our allies and partners," said Roddan. "We are honored to once again dedicate our combined efforts to touch countless lives and foster goodwill between participating nations. The work we do at Operation Christmas Drop embodies the enduring mutual cooperation and trust between our friends across Micronesia, Palau, and the entire Indo-Pacific region."

The bundles will contain donated non-perishable food, fishing supplies, schoolbooks, and Santa's holiday staple toys for the islands' children.

Operation Christmas Drop has not only become a cherished tradition for those who organize and participate in its execution but also a beacon of goodwill for the communities it serves.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

DOC

From page 1

Corrections, giving the department and its officers a chance to participate in the training for the first time and to reap its benefits.

To paint a picture, the scenario at DOC yesterday afternoon involved four inmates and a DOC officer. The inmates are drinking homemade moonshine in the common area, and as the officer calls for the men to return to their cells, they refuse to comply and held the officer hostage and assaulted him.

During the scenario, the inmates took all of the officer's gear, including a knife, and threatened other DOC officers who tried to help, saying they would hurt the officer if they came close.

Acting DOC commissioner Marvin Seman believes his officers did well, despite this being their first time to participate.

"The scenario that was given to us today was a big one. The scenario is a hostage-taking of one of our officers. The DOC officers initiated a lockdown, isolated the area, and tried to negotiate with the inmates. Meanwhile, DPS' SWAT team was called for assistance to breach the area and extract the hostage," he said.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

YUMUL

From page 1

would like to confirm the accuracy of this information about the $1-million security deposit. Chi asked Yumul how the money can be used if it exists.

In his response letter yesterday, Yumul told Chi that DPW records do not indicate any such security deposit.

Yumul also noted that DPW does not deal with security deposits for any construction projects.

"To further assist in your request, please provide us with the date of deposit, account number or any identifying number used for such deposit," Yumul told the IPI director.

Saipan Tribune learned that IPI is now looking into their records about the $1 million deposit after one of the construction companies on island disclosed there was such a deposit.

Construction work on IPI's casino/resort project stopped in January 2021 when the U.S. District Court for the NMI issued an order stopping IPI's construction for violation of a previously entered consent judgment.

SCHOOL

From page 1

community.

"We have received tips through DPS' landline and Crime Stoppers of possible suspects. The criminal investigation unit, or CIB, is working on these leads right now. There are no warrants of arrests and we do not have actual suspects right now. We will release that information as soon as possible, unless we determine they are juveniles. This case is currently active; no arrests have been made," he said.

According to Sato, DPS received a call in the morning of Nov. 10 from the Da'Ok Academy's school administrator, who determined that the school had been burglarized after viewing the surveillance footage.

"In the morning of Nov. 10, the school administrator was viewing the school's surveillance footage because she noticed a nearby closet was open and the room was in disarray. That's when she confirmed that the school had been burglarized. Items that were stolen include laptops, iPads, and more," Sato said.

The CNMI has seen a recent spike in the number of burglaries and robberies and many of these cases remain active and unsolved.

One of the most recent unsolved burglaries victimized an 84-year-old man who was held at knifepoint at his residence on Capital Hill last month.

In that case, DPS has received tips and CIB continues to investigate them, Sato said. However, no suspect has been identified so no arrest has been made yet.

DPS sent out a press release seeking the community's help to solve this case.

Reports state that the man was awakened by two males who were inside his residence. One of the suspects held him at knifepoint and threatened him while the other went through the victim's belongings.

DPS reported that the suspects later fled the scene and were able to steal $650 in cash, an Echo bushcutter, and two Samsung cell phones.

A helper who arrived in the morning to do yard cleaning assisted in reporting the incident because the elderly man's cell phone had been stolen.

OAG

From page 2

sion did not have enough members to constitute a quorum to conduct business and hold hearings. "That is not the case with the present commission," she said.

The Commonwealth Code expressly vests the CSC with the duty "to hear and decide appeals of any person aggrieved by any action of the Office of Personnel Management or other management or any employee for disciplinary action, suspension, demotion or dismissal from the civil service."

To carry out that responsibility, Tenorio said, the commission has the discretion to hire a qualified hearing officer if deemed essential, but the responsibility for hearing and deciding appeals rests with the commission.

That responsibility is one of five enumerated duties that have been described by the Legislature with enough details and assigned to the commission pursuant to the CNMI Constitution, Tenorio said.

She said the constitution mandates the Legislature to "provide for a nonpartisan and independent civil service with the duty to establish and administer personnel policies for the Commonwealth government."

For fiscal year 2024, the Legislature appropriated $98,174 to the commission for its operations (including personnel).

To perform its responsibilities provided by law and regulations, including to hear and decide on appeals, it is incumbent on the commission to address the funding issue either by re-prioritizing its budget or by appealing to Gov. Arnold I. Palacios to exercise his reprogramming authority so that the commission may hire a hearing officer, she added.

Senate confirms de Alba to Court of Appeals for 9th Circuit

SAN FRANCISCO—The United States Senate voted 48-43 to confirm President Joseph R. Biden Jr.'s, nomination of District Judge Ana de Alba to serve as a circuit judge for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

Judge de Alba was nominated for the judgeship on April 17, 2023, and had her nomination hearing on May 17. Her nomination was reported to the Senate Floor on June 8.

Upon taking her oath, she will fill a judgeship vacant since May 31, 2023, when Circuit Judge Paul Watford resigned. Once she has taken her oath of office, Judge de Alba will be the fourth Hispanic woman appointed to the court. She will maintain chambers in Fresno.

"Hearty congratulations to Judge de Alba! We are thrilled that the U.S. Senate has recognized her stellar qualifications and substantial experience as fully supporting her elevation to the federal appellate court," said Chief U.S. District Judge Kimberly J. Mueller, Eastern District of California.

Judge Mueller added, "The news is bittersweet for us, of course, given that we lose a valued colleague and a wonderful judge from the federal trial court. But we also celebrate the special distinction that comes with Judge de Alba's joining the Ninth Circuit: the Eastern District of California will now, with Judge Callahan in Sacramento, have a federal appellate judge with chambers in each of our major courthouses in Sacramento and in Fresno!"

Judge de Alba has served as a district judge on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of California since July 2022, when she became the first Latina appointed to that court. Prior to her appointment to the federal bench, she served as a California Superior Court judge in Fresno County since 2018.

de Alba

Judge de Alba was an adjunct professor for the San Joaquin College of Law in Clovis, California, in 2021. She began her legal career in 2007 as an associate then in 2013 as a partner at Lang Richet & Patch, where her practice focused on employment, business, tort and construction litigation.

Born in Merced, California, Judge de Alba received her Juris Doctor from the University of California Berkeley School of Law in 2007 and her Bachelor of Arts, with highest honors, from U.C. Berkeley in 2002.

Since 2012, she has been a board member of the Central Valley Access to Justice Coalition. From 2017 to 2018, she was an executive board member of the California Lawyers Association.

She has held numerous other board memberships including the Rape Counseling Services of Fresno, 2016-2018; California Rural Legal Assistance, Inc., 2015-2018; Legal Aid at Work, 2014-2018; Fresno County Bar Association, 2013-2015; California Bar Foundation (now California ChangeLawyers), 2013-2014; Central California Legal Services, 2011-2013; and the State Bar of California, 2009-2013.

In 2018, Judge de Alba received the Rape Counseling Services of Fresno's "Thank You" Award; Centro La Familia Advocacy Services' recognition "Honoring Your Passion to Protect the Rights of Workers and Families"; and the "Champion of Justice" Award from Central California Legal Services, Inc.

In 2017, she received the Justice Pauline Hanson Award from the Fresno County Women Lawyers' Association Board of Directors, and the U.C. Berkeley Chicano Latino Alumni Association-Central Valley Chapter, Alumni of the Year Award.

She has received numerous other awards dating back to 2011 including the California Young Lawyers Association's Jack Berman Award of Achievement for Distinguished Service to the Profession and the Public in 2012.

The U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals had 7,784 new case filings in fiscal year 2023. The court is authorized 29 judgeships, all of which are currently filled. Appointed under Article III of the U.S. Constitution, federal district court judges are nominated by the president, confirmed by the Senate and serve lifetime appointments upon good behavior. ***(PR)***

Saipan Awaodori Team bound for Guam this weekend

The Saipan Awaodori Team will perform in this weekend's 42nd Akimatsuri Japanese Autumn Festival in Guam.

Eleven members of the Japanese traditional dance troupe will fly to the U.S. territory today, namely Coddie Forbes, Owen Quitugua, Jonathan Agulto, Cassidy Wabol, Vianny Mettao, Jeafanie Tibong, Leon Wabol, Gizelle Cabaobas, Marcela Heben, Julianne Mettao, and Ina Mettao.

They will be accompanied by PDM Promoters, Inc. promoter and CEO Misako Kamata.

This is the second time the Saipan Awaodori Team has been invited to the Akimatsuri Japanese Autumn Festival after the group also made the trip last year, which marked its first off-island performance post the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The team's first performance last year was well received and applauded by the crowd. So, they were invited again and this time we chose the best among the team so Guam audiences will be entertained and will enjoy seeing them perform again. The CNMI will surely be proud of them," said Kamata.

Aside from the Akimatsuri Japanese Autumn Festival on Nov. 18 at the Ypao Beach Park, the Saipan Awaodori Team has also been invited to perform in several other events.

They include shows at the Guma Trankilidat, Agana Heights Mayor's Office, and Skinner Plaza for Food Truck Day on Thursday.

Friday's itinerary includes performances at the Tamuning Senior Center, Micronesia Mall, Guam Japanese School, Guam Premium Outlet, and Festival Eve Dinner. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Saipan Awaodori Team, bound for this weekend's 42nd Akimatsuri Japanese Autumn Festival in Guam, pose for a group photo. Sitting left is PDM Promoters, Inc. promoter and CEO Misako Kamata.

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Attorney for Administrator Manuel Mangarero

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF:	Civil Action No. 09-0379
MAXIMO LAIROPI OLOPAI, Decedent.	NOTICE OF HEARING ON THE STIPULATED MOTION TO CONFIRM DEED OF FAMILY LANDS TO DECEDENT MAXIMO OLOPAI and FOR ATTORNEY'S FEES TO THE ESTATES'S FORMER ATTORNEY AND to REIMBURSE COSTS FOR MEDICAL AND FUNERAL EXPENSES FORMER TO ADMINISTRATRIX
	PROPOSED DATE: November 30, 2023 TIME: 10:00 a.m.
	JUDGE: JOSEPH N. CAMACHO

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Administrator Manuel Mangarero, an heir of the Estate, through undersigned counsel, has filed a stipulated motion to confirm deed of family land to decedent Maximo Olopai and for Attorney's Fees to the Estates's Former Attorney and to reimburse costs for medical and funeral expenses to former Administratrix. The hearing on this motion is set for November 30, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. before Judge Joseph N. Camacho.

Dated this 2nd day of October, 2023.

/s/_____
Clerk of Court/ Deputy Clerk

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW24-ITB No.: 42400006

SUBMISSION DATE: December 11, 2023 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"Route 36 (Windward/Chalan Kalarera) Improvement, Phase1A."

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

The project package will be available on or after **November 09, 2023** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **November 28, 2023,** 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **December 07, 2023** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division,** 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ RAY N. YUMUL
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ BRIEN SERS NICHOLAS JR.
Acting Director, Division of Procurement Services

COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORP.
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS
MOBILE CLINIC SCHEDULE
NOV 15 29
Adult Health Check
Update on personal medical history, blood pressure check, glucose check, resources & referrals
Northern Marianas College , Finasisu from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
Java Joes, Dan Dan from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
NOV 14 22
Child Health Check
For children 0-17 years old. Measurements and growth, anticipatory guidance, resources & referrals
San Vicente Youth Affairs, San Vicente from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
Han Nam Supermarket, Koblerville from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
NOV 17 21
Women's Health Check
For women who haven't seen a healthcare provider longer than 1 year, pap smears, breast exams, pre/post partum care, resources & referrals
Karidat, Dan Dan from 8:00AM - 11:30AM
Koblerville Youth Center from 1:00PM - 4:30PM
NOVEMBER IS DIABETES AWARENESS MONTH
WHAT TO BRING:
INSURANCE CARD
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VALID PHOTO ID
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3 SIS students are named QuestBridge finalists

Saipan International School seniors Olivia Hwang, Stephanie Kim, and Lisha Lai were named finalists for the QuestBridge scholarship after completing and submitting an extensive application packet.

"We are very proud of our three finalists. These three students represent about 15% of our senior class. It is amazing to see such a large group being recognized internationally," said SIS headmaster Dr. Ron Snyder.

QuestBridge has matched a student from SIS every year since 2020 and the school remains hopeful that they will receive more than one match this year. SIS matched students are:

- Malika Miyawaki, Class of 2020 (Emory University);
- Frederic Guintu, Class of 2021 (Emory University);
- Cevina Hwang, Class of 2022 (Princeton University); and
- Tiana Cabrera, Class of 2023 (Wesleyan University).

The QuestBridge National College Match is a national program that connects high-achieving high school seniors with full four-year scholarships to the nation's top colleges. This year, out of over 18,000 applications, 6,885 students were selected as National College Match Finalists. Finalists exhibit outstanding academic achievement, and qualify financially.

"In 2020, during the height of the pandemic, I became a high schooler without any celebration for finishing middle school," said Kim. "Many activities were restricted, and I couldn't believe this was how my high school life would look. While waiting for the world to return to normal, my desire to try new things grew, motivating me to excel both academically and in extracurricular activities once conditions improved."

Kim founded a school club dedicated to helping the local animal shelter, shadowed physicians in the emergency room to explore a potential career interest in medicine, and took several leadership positions in the Student Council, Rotary Interact Club, and Model United Nations.

She challenged herself by taking seven AP courses and earned the AP Scholar with Distinction award.

Additionally, she participated in various school activities, including volleyball, soccer, cross country, and track and field.

Lai

Hwang

Kim

"The dormant stage I experienced at the beginning of high school became active as my years in high school progressed. Although I didn't succeed in all my endeavors, I cherish the experiences I've accumulated throughout my high school journey, both the short and long-lasting ones," Kim said.

Kim believes that being a QuestBridge finalist opens up a multitude of opportunities for individuals who might not otherwise have the chance to attend colleges and achieve their dreams. "QuestBridge makes expensive colleges affordable through the match process, and even if we aren't ultimately matched, we still receive benefits such as waived application fees, generous financial aid packages, and the opportunity to join a supportive community of scholars," she said. "QuestBridge functions as a bridge that connects students to their dreams. I deeply appreciate their positive impact.

Kim's top five college choices are: Brown, Tufts, Boston College, Yale, and Swarthmore.

Focus and commitment are hallmarks of success at SIS and keys to developing a portfolio that leads to QuestBridge offers.

"During my high school, I've have shaped my experiences to achieve my future ambition," said Hwang. "Academically, I've consistently earned good grades and served as [National Honor Society] president.

"Outside the classroom, I've actively participated in shadowing and interning in dental clinics and engaged in outreach to different schools to teach students about sustaining good oral health. These experiences have taught me valuable lessons in teamwork, perseverance, and opportunity in order to become a QuestBridge finalist and on to my lifelong dream of becoming a dentist." she said.

Hwang's top college choices are Emory University, Colgate University, and Columbia University."

For QuestBridge, excellent academics are important but are just a part of the application process. It also requires commitment to personal development and service.

Lai has completed and is currently taking 12 AP courses, earning the AP Scholar with Honor and the AP International Diploma awards.

"Beyond academics, I have also actively participated in various extracurricular activities, ranging from my involvement in speech and debate since middle school to my current role as a cabinet member of the CNMI Model United Nations Club.

"I have also dedicated my time to community service initiatives, receiving the Best Interactor of the Year (2022-2023) award from the SIS Rotary Interact Club, serving as the treasurer of the Geckos 4H Club, a member of the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance Club, and a volunteer at Saipan Cares for Animals," Lai said.

Lai has also engaged in athletic activities as the secretary of the SIS Golf Club and participated in sports like soccer and volleyball. She also had the opportunity to represent the CNMI during the Close Up Foundation trip after winning an essay contest. She had the privilege to meet Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) at the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

When asked about how she feels about being a QuestBridge finalist, she said, "I am extremely honored, grateful, and excited about the opportunity this represents. Being selected as a finalist signifies recognition for the dedication I have invested in my academic pursuits, extracurricular activities, and community service initiatives. The application process itself has also provided valuable experience. This recognition is a significant step toward achieving my academic goals, and I eagerly anticipate the potential opportunities of continuing my education at a top-tier institution."

Finalists are selected by QuestBridge and will be considered by multiple college partners of their choice to be "matched"— admitted early with a Match Scholarship from the college. Finalists who are not matched have additional admission opportunities through QuestBridge and can receive financial aid packages that are often as generous as a full scholarship.

If picked as a Match Scholarship Recipient, students are admitted early to QuestBridge college partners with full four-year scholarships provided by the colleges and universities that covers the full cost of attendance, including tuition, room and board, books and supplies, and travel expenses.

The next step is that finalists must finish up any specific requirements for the universities on their list they hope to match with. This requires them to write supplemental essays to each of their universities.

"This is an amazing opportunity to provide financial freedom to start their career without debt from some incredible universities," SIS counselor Angela Taflinger said. "This has taken a lot of time and dedication to complete this extensive application but we all hope it will be worth it in the end. We are excited to see where their path takes them in the future and we are hopeful that the QuestBridge schools will recognize their hard work and potential." ***(PR)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
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PUBLIC NOTICE

11.16.2023

Notice for Public Comment

Reprogramming of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)-COVID Funds

Program Year/ IDIS No.:	Program:	Activity Name:	Subrecipient:	Approved Budget:	Proposed Reprogramming: Amount	Proposed Revised Project: Budget	Current IDIS Funded Amount:
IDIS# 720	CDBG-CV	Acquisition of a Mobile Clinic for Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation	Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation	$521,806.50	($69,719.52)	$452,086.98	$521,806.50
IDIS# 727	CDBG-CV	CDBG-CV Food Pantry Program (Karidat Social Services)	Karidat Social Services, Saipan	$391,292.05	($60.71)	$391,231.34	$391,292.05
IDIS# 718	CDBG-CV	CDBG-CV 19 Planning and Administrative (Purchase of Mobile Clinic for CHCC)		$27,463.50	($6,695.60)	$20,767.90	$27,463.50
IDIS# 724	CDBG-CV	CDBG-CV Emergency Housing Assistance (Mortgage Assistance)		$150,903.25	($75,996.69)	$74,906.56	$150,903.25
IDIS# 742	CDBG-CV	CDBG-CV Emergency Rental Payment Assistance		$110,000.00	($6,001.81)	$103,998.19	$110,000.00
		Total Reprogrammed from Activities:			**($158,474.33)**		
IDIS# 727	CDBG-CV	CDBG CV Food Pantry Program	Center for Living Independently in the CNMI	$126,465.50	$130,474.33	$256,939.83	$126,465.50
IDIS# 729	CDBG-CV	CDBG CV Food Pantry Program Planning and Administrative costs		$28,100.45	$28,000.00	$56,100.45	$28,100.45
		Total Reprogrammed to Activities:			**$158,474.33**		

Our agency through its Citizen Participation Plan (CPP) publishes a "Public Notice" on reprogramming funds over $100,001.00/Planning and Administrative Cost to a project activity, which constitutes as a substantial amendment. Therefore, any comments from the general public should be submitted to NMHC Central Office located in Garapan, Saipan, and to the Rota and Tinian Field Offices, on or before December 19, 2023 no later than 4:30 P.M. You may contact Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner @ (670)234-6866/9447.

"NMHC is an equal employment and fair housing public agency"

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PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

NMHC hereby publicly discloses that on August 23, 2023, **Ellis F. Barcinas,** an immediate family member **of Janel B. Crisostomo,** an employee of the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, applied for assistance under the Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Housing Program.

Said applicant has been determined to be a member of a group or class of low to moderate income individuals intended to be beneficiaries of the assisted activity and is applying to receive generally the same benefits being made available to the group or class. **Ms. Crisostomo** is not and shall not be involved in the handling of this grant application.

NMHC discloses this possible conflict pursuant to 24 CFR 92.356 in order to allow any interested persons to comment before the application is considered for an exception under the applicable conflict regulations.

Written comments may be faxed to Fox No.: (670) 234-9451, mailed to P.O Box 500514 Saipan, MP 96950, or emailed to cnmi-cdbg-dr@nmhcgov.net on or before **November 30, 2023.**

Dated this **9th** day of **November**, **2023.**

/s/
JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

FOLLOWING TROPICAL CYCLONE LOLA

US Coast Guard concludes post-storm support to Vanuatu

USCG

Following the passage of Tropical Cyclone Lola through the South Pacific island chain the U.S. Coast Guard deployed to assist the island nation of Vanuatu in the aftermath of the disaster.

USCG

The mission's objectives included conducting post-storm overflights, assessing the condition of ports and critical infrastructure affected by the cyclone, and providing relief supplies.

HONOLULU—Following the passage of Tropical Cyclone Lola through the South Pacific island chain the U.S. Coast Guard deployed to assist the island nation of Vanuatu in the aftermath of the disaster.

In response to a request from the U.S. Embassy in Port Moresby on Oct. 25, the Coast Guard mobilized an Air Station Barbers Point C-130 aircraft, already forward deployed in the area to provide aerial surveillance fishery patrols in support of a Forum Fisheries Agency multi-lateral operation, to support Vanuatu's government.

The mission's objectives included conducting post-storm overflights, assessing the condition of ports and critical infrastructure affected by the cyclone, and providing relief supplies.

Over the course of approximately seven days, the C-130 aircrew conducted post storm assessment of the Torba region and overflights of Santo Airport and Lonorore Airport to evaluate airfield feasibility in anticipation of cargo deliveries. Additionally, the C-130 provided overflights with personnel from the National Disaster Management Office and USAID to support technical assistance and support provisions of the bilateral agreement with Vanuatu. During the post-storm flights, the C-130 delivered over 80,000 lbs of relief supplies, including Australian and New Zealand Aid Kits and medical supplies, to Vanuatu.

USCG

The U.S. Coast Guard mobilized an Air Station Barbers Point C-130 aircraft to support Vanuatu's government after the passage of Tropical Cyclone Lola.

"The USCG's deployment of a C-130 to conduct post-storm assessments and deliver vital supplies to the Pacific Island chain of Vanuatu demonstrates our unwavering commitment to humanitarian aid and disaster response," said Cmdr. Andrew Williams, Coast Guard District 14's enforcement branch chief. "We always stand ready to assist our international partners in times of need, working together to restore hope and resilience in affected communities."

Vanuatu, an island nation consisting of approximately 80 islands with a population of around 335,000, is situated approximately 1,090 miles east of Australia. The Coast Guard's unique capabilities and expertise in maritime environments have allowed crews to provide damage assessment, search and rescue operations, logistical support, and real-time situational awareness for senior leaders.

The Coast Guard's mission exemplifies its dedication to ensuring the safety and well-being of those affected by natural disasters, even in distant regions. ***(USCG)***

USCG

Relief supplies include Australian and New Zealand Aid Kits and medical supplies.

USCG

During the post-storm flights, the C-130 delivered over 80,000 lbs of relief supplies.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

The rising tide of hate crimes can't be ignored

It's hard to remember a time that has felt more tumultuous. We've barely arrived on the other side of a pandemic that both put the world on pause and divided our country. A band of mostly white hooligans swarmed our Capitol building, attempting to overthrow a legitimate presidential election on behalf of a man who now is charged with 91 felonies, and yet inexplicably has a chance of being reelected president next year.

And on Oct. 7 an attack by Hamas that killed about 1,200 people, including children and the elderly, was followed by ongoing retaliation against Hamas by the Israeli government that has killed more than 10,000 people in Gaza, according to the health ministry there, many of them children and the elderly.

These horrific events are now also linked to rising numbers of threats and hate crimes in this country.

Every day seems to bring a story of yet another violent or ugly incident. A young Palestinian boy brutally stabbed to death in Illinois. An Arab Muslim student at Stanford University injured by a hit-and-run driver—the same university where Jewish students allege that an instructor made them stand in a corner of the classroom while he berated them about Israel. Swastikas popping up at middle and high schools and synagogues. Threats and harassment against American Muslims are increasing as are antisemitic threats and vandalism. In an ironic twist, a woman was accused of purposely driving her car into the building of an antisemitic group because she mistakenly thought it was a school for Jewish children.

In some ways, this increase in hate-driven incidents is not an anomaly. The number of hate crimes has been rising steadily before this.

A March FBI report found that the number of hate crimes reported in 2021 had increased by 11.6% over the previous year. In 2022, they rose again. Attacks on Black people made up the majority of hate crimes, according to the FBI. But incidents targeting Latinos and members of the LGBTQ+ community also rose. The number of antisemitic attacks increased by 25% from 2021 to 2022.

Horrific things will always happen. But somewhere along the way, we lost the ability to get through them without erupting into hate-fueled incidents against innocent people. Remember the attacks against Asians during the COVID pandemic? Or the virulence unleashed toward Muslims in the wake of 9/11? The FBI reported that anti-Muslim attacks soared from 28 in 2000 to 481 in 2001.

Of course, hatred of marginalized groups has ignited violence throughout history. But the rise in hate incidents over the last two decades has taken on a discouraging pattern: When something traumatic happens, a signal seems to go off that it's time to unleash violence or threats against one another.

The words and actions of our leaders can either calm or fuel such responses. It's impossible to ignore the role that former President Trump played in the rise of hate crimes in the U.S. His ugly rhetoric against Muslims, undocumented immigrants and the Black Lives Matter movement accomplished two things: It gave a stamp of approval to those who would flout

See RISING on Page 9

Supreme Court's new code of conduct won't change a thing

By NOAH FELDMAN
Bloomberg Opinion

Noah Feldman is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist. A professor of law at Harvard University, he is author, most recently, of* The Broken Constitution: Lincoln, Slavery and the Refounding of America.

It's great that the U.S. Supreme Court promulgated a code of conduct for the justices. It should help put an end to the narrative that the court has been tone deaf to criticism of its ethical lapses. That said, the code will change nothing substantive about the way the justices conduct themselves. The code provisions roughly match those of the code that binds lower federal court judges—and that in practice the justices have been following for years. And no independent entity will formally apply the code to the Supreme Court. The justices will continue to be judges of their own ethical propriety—a product of the constitutional system that makes the Supreme Court the highest organ of the judicial branch.

The justices did not equivocate when it came to explaining why they are announcing the code now. A statement preceding the code explained that "for the most part these rules and principles are not new." The problem was "the absence of a code," which the court said "has led in recent years to the misunderstanding that the justices of this court, unlike all other jurists in this country, regard themselves as unrestricted by any ethics rules."

You can't get much more polemical than that in an unsigned statement attributable to nine Supreme Court justices. The justices were saying that not having a code was leading to them being beaten up in the court of public opinion. And that beating, they were saying, was unfair, based on a "misunderstanding."

In one sense, the justices are right. As anyone who follows the court closely knows, the justices have long treated a variety of sources as governing its ethics. Those included statutes, the general judicial code, advisory ethics opinions issued by the relevant committee of the conference of federal judges, and historic practice. It's accurate to say that the current code "largely represents a codification of principles that we have long regarded as governing conduct."

In a different sense, the justices' insistence that the code was only needed "to dispel" misunderstanding downplays the background reasons for needing to adopt a code formally. In the wake of the court's Dobbs opinion overturning Roe v. Wade, the legitimacy of the court's decision making has come under intense attack, probably greater than during any era since the 1920s. In that environment, the accusation of illegitimacy has been fueled in part by a series of mini scandals of varying degrees of gravity, such as Justice Clarence Thomas's relationship with Texas billionaire Harlan Crow, who bought Thomas's mother's house with the stated intent of historical preservation.

It's fair to say that the drumbeat of ethics criticism aimed at the justices has therefore been part of a broader attack on the jurisprudence of the conservative majority. The court's adoption of the code is therefore a defensive maneuver. The justices can't - or rather won't - roll back their revolutionary decisions. But they can make it clear that they follow ethics rules.

The biggest difference between the rules governing the justices and those governing other judges have to do with recusal, the decision not to participate in the consideration of a given case. Both the code and the brief commentary accompanying it make it clear that recusal of a justice sitting on a case can have a major impact on a court that has only nine members, all of whom sit on all cases. In the lower courts, if one judge recuses, another judge can step in. Not so on the Supreme Court. In closely contested cases, recusals can make the difference for who wins and loses.

In recognition of this difference, the court's code repeats what it calls the "time-honored rule" that where it's necessary for a justice to sit on a case, the justice may choose not to recuse even though recusal would ordinarily be warranted. That makes sense. But it is unlikely to satisfy some of the court's harsher critics, who want the justices to be utterly beyond reproach.

What's more, the need for all nine justices to sit on close cases explains functionally why it would be impossible for the justices to, for example, create a subcommittee that would decide on who should be recused when. That subcommittee would effectively become the whole Supreme Court for purposes of determining outcomes in close cases.

The upshot is that the justices must be the judges in their own cases when it comes to recusal. There's something funny about that, given the old common law idea that the most fundamental principle of justice is that no man should be the judge in his own cause. The truth is, however, that whether to be recused is not a "cause" in the ordinary legal sense of the term. It's a discretionary judgment about ethics, to be made by each justice for himself or herself.

That's a good reminder that the justices, in the end, are human. They are neither angels nor robots. They may have agreed to an official code, but the buck of judicial judgment must stop somewhere. And it stops with the nine Supreme Court justices.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Gaza's health system has collapsed, multiplying the war's toll on children

By STEVE SOSEBEE
Los Angeles Times

Steve Sosebee is the president and founder of Palestine Children's Relief Fund, a nonprofit based in Ohio and Ramallah in the West Bank.

As the head of a humanitarian organization, I have been working for more than 30 years both to save the lives of injured children in Gaza and to help establish a modern health care system for specialized pediatric care in Gaza. That dream has been shattered. The lives of more than 5,000 children killed or missing in Gaza over the past month necessitate a redirection of our resources and efforts back toward the most basic measures to save children's lives.

This journey helping Gaza children began in 1991 when I brought the first injured child from Gaza to the Shriners hospital in Los Angeles for prosthetic care after he suffered triple amputation from a bomb blast. Since then, we founded a humanitarian nonprofit to help bring hundreds of injured and ill children to the United States from Gaza for free care. The need has only grown.

Last week, two brothers we sent in 2017 to Shreveport, Louisiana, for craniofacial surgery were killed along with others in their family by an Israeli airstrike on their home in Khan Yunis in southern Gaza, according to a video posted by their sister. Farid and Qossay Sallout are now among the more than 5,000 dead and missing children in Gaza since Oct. 7.

As we expanded after 1991, we sent thousands of international volunteer doctors and nurses on medical missions to Gaza, providing specialized surgeries for tens of thousands of children. In 2019, we achieved a significant milestone by establishing Gaza's inaugural pediatric oncology department. At one time every child with cancer had had to travel outside Gaza for care, but the majority were then being treated for this terrible disease in our new department.

As we focused on improving the health sector's specialized care of children, we have assessed the needs of Gaza's hospitals to design programs and initiatives to enhance patient care and reduce the need for external referrals.

All this now is destroyed as the health system collapses and the humanitarian crisis deepens. Since Oct. 21, the influx of a few hundred aid trucks from Egypt has fallen drastically short of the 1,200 daily shipments needed to meet the basic necessities of Gaza's 2.2 million inhabitants. The absence of fuel within these aid deliveries devastates the deteriorating health infrastructure. Gaza's remaining hospitals rely on generators; since the electrical grid shut down almost a month ago, 14 of the region's 35 inpatient hospitals have closed, as have 64% of primary care facilities across Gaza.

The lack of fuel has far-reaching implications: Surgeons lack proper lighting to operate, anesthesiologists cannot administer anesthesia, intensivists can't intubate critically injured patients, and neonatologists cannot provide critical care for premature infants. Additionally, nephrologists are unable to perform dialysis, and radiologists cannot conduct necessary X-rays for treatment planning, leaving thousands of civilians suffering from traumatic injuries daily. We had just completed a renovation of the operating theater in the Indonesian Hospital in Gaza, which is now closed because of the lack of fuel.

The scarcity of medications is another pressing concern. According to the World Health Organization, hospitals in the north are performing complex surgeries, including amputations, without anesthesia because of the shortage of medical supplies. Furthermore, hundreds of children with third-degree burns are being treated without appropriate dressings, receiving only acetaminophen for pain relief.

It's not just injuries from the war that are inadequately addressed now. At Al-Rantisi Pediatric Specialized Hospital, where we established Gaza's sole pediatric oncology department in 2019, children in remission from cancer are experiencing relapses because of shortages of essential drugs and treatments.

In addition to these challenges, our dedicated staff members have faced personal tragedies, with their homes destroyed and family members lost, compelling them to seek refuge in the south to escape escalating violence surrounding Rantisi. On Nov. 5, the hospital was bombed. On Friday, the Israel Defense Forces forced the evacuation of patients, their families, staff and the estimated 6,000 displaced people. But all hospitals in the south are beyond capacity and unable to accept even simple cases, let alone children with cancer.

With 1.5 million people displaced in Gaza and 40% of all housing structures damaged or destroyed, thousands, mostly children, seek shelter within overcrowded United Nations schools, leading to a surge in diseases. According to the U.N., deteriorating sanitation, lack of privacy and overcrowded conditions pose significant health and safety risks, resulting in a surge of acute respiratory infections, diarrhea, scabies and chickenpox among those seeking refuge.

The situations in northern and southern Gaza, for children and adults, are dire and deteriorating. Under these conditions, we can't primarily focus on the sort of progress we saw in recent years such as providing advanced cancer care to children. And yet, much like the indomitable spirit of the people of Gaza, we remain steadfast in our commitment to aiding them in their journey toward recovery and rebuilding.

Although saving children's lives must always be our first priority, Gaza's collapsed health system will need to be rebuilt, again from the ashes of its once-proud hospitals, particularly in specialized pediatric care, which serves nearly half the population. The killing of thousands of innocent children over the past month has shown that my lifelong mission to serve Gaza's children will truly last my lifetime.

What will the Matthew Perry toxicology results reveal? Here's why it shouldn't matter

By SEAN DANIELS
Los Angeles Times

Sean Daniels is a person in long-term recovery who runs the Recovery Project at Florida Studio Theatre in Sarasota. His play The White Chip *is scheduled to reopen off-Broadway in February.*

We're still waiting for the official cause of death for Matthew Perry, who was famous for starring in "Friends" and struggling mightily with substance abuse. Even in the addiction recovery world, I've heard people suggest Perry's legacy depends on whether the pending toxicology reports show he suffered a relapse. They couldn't be more wrong.

Yes, Perry died of still unknown causes. More important, he changed the conversation about addiction in our country. More people will get help because of his bravery. Fewer people will die.

But … did it get him in the end? And shouldn't we know that before we talk about his recovery—whether it stuck or not?

That type of thinking is exactly what keeps people sick. Shame is an ally of addiction, and this notion threatens people in recovery with the possibility of extra shame: that no matter what you do to get sober, if it ends poorly, it was all worth nothing.

Even in the recovery world, where we say "relapse is part of recovery," the most valued story is that of a person seen as fully recovered. We value time, the unspoken message to a newcomer being that those with the most time know the most.

So when you're a relapser like me—and I was really a professional relapser—what you hear is that everything you learned during your last sober stint is worthless and you're now back to square one. And how many times can you hear that before you're tired of starting over?

If you were driving across the country and your car broke down, would you get it fixed and then go back to where you started your trip to begin again? That doesn't make any sense, but it's exactly how we talk about addiction and relapse.

Learning, growth, healing, amends, reconnection—none of these aspects of recovery have to happen in a straight line. If you can do any of them at all during your lifetime, it's a success.

From my perspective, the world record for sobriety is 24 hours.

Yes, of course there's value in having 12 years compared with seven days: The cravings have weakened, you're not sweating through the sheets at night, and, sure, you probably don't have a parole officer anymore.

But I'm not sure time in recovery guarantees that you become a truly empathetic or inspirational person. I know lots of sober jerks, and I know plenty of people who are bettering the world even though they just can't beat this beast of addiction.

Let's tell the newcomer, "Every day you don't drink and you don't use is a victory. No one will take it from you."

I remember when the idea of going an hour seemed impossible. A day was a victory. And when it took me two years to string together 90 days together in a row, I felt like I was doing it for the first time because I had internalized the shame about relapse. In reality, I had been fighting it for two years, not just 90 days. So I'm not shaming the next person who faces a similar struggle.

I hope the toxicology results for Perry, whatever they are, give his family some answers. But all the rest of us need to know is that the world is better off, and more people still live in it, because he was here. Matthew Perry 1, shame 0.

Now let's follow his example and celebrate any 24 hours of sobriety that anyone has. After all, they're tying the world record.

RISING

From page 8

the norms of civility and paved the way for a disturbing rise in white nationalism. His repeated reference to COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus" was linked to a near-immediate rise in anti-Asian hashtags and violence against Asians ensued. His refusal to accept the valid results of the 2020 presidential election led to the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol by a mob of white supremacists who felt entitled to try to bring down our way of government.

The hatred is compounded exponentially by social media, which allows people who might never have voiced ugly attitudes—at least not publicly—to reach many thousands of people. It provides a place for hate groups to congregate and recruit, spreading lies that become memes that become accepted as truth.

Instead of binding together in threatening times, we have become a society that looks for a group to blame, and then spreads ugly lies and insults about them.

There is no cure for this. But it is clear that words matter. This is a country that guarantees extraordinary freedom of speech, and that right must be guarded. The only valid way to fight harmful speech is with better speech. People with more caring minds and better understanding must at least call out harmful rhetoric whenever they encounter it. The voices that reject mindless hatred must be louder than the ones embracing it.

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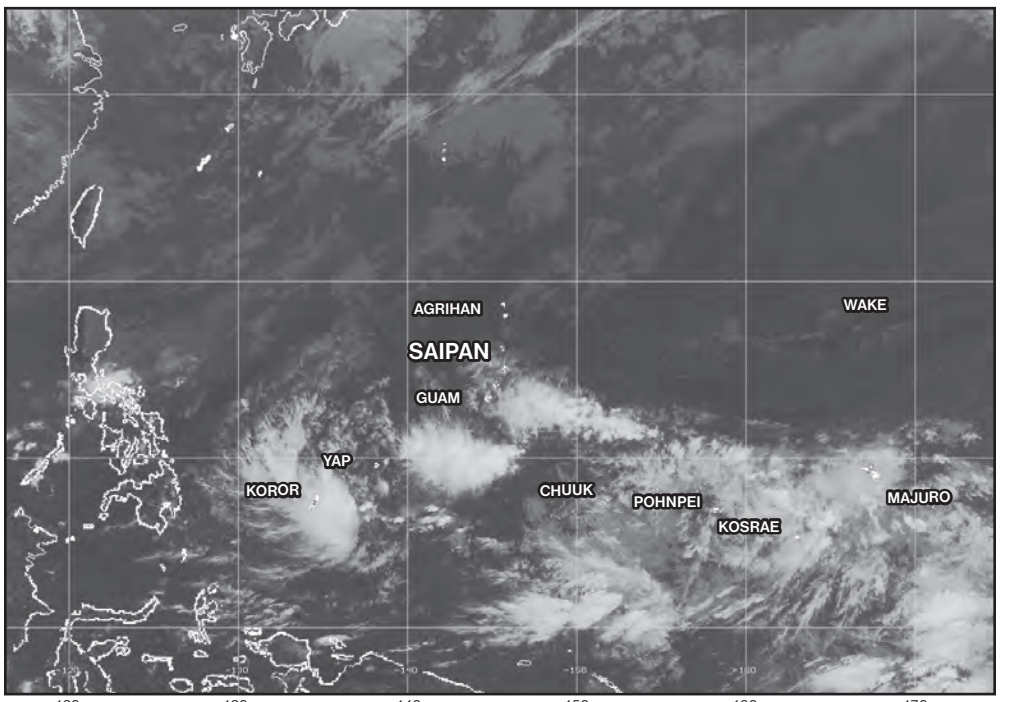
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Breezy. Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 20 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. east winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.
87 78°	87 78°	87 78°	87 78°	87 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 10:36 AM, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery suggests partly cloudy skies with isolated showers for the region. Altimetry shows combined seas of 6 to 8 feet. Ipan and Tanapag buoys show 8 to 9 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	84° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	88° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	87° / 77°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:18 AM	5:44 PM
Friday	6:19 AM	5:44 PM
Saturday	6:19 AM	5:44 PM
Sunday	6:20 AM	5:43 PM
Monday	6:20 AM	5:43 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	8:48 AM	8:08 PM	-
Friday	9:49 AM	9:10 PM	-
Saturday	10:48 AM	10:13 PM	-
Sunday	11:41 AM	11:15 PM	-
Monday	12:30 PM	-	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	63° / 55°
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	54° / 39°
Hong Kong	Sunny	81° / 73°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	83° / 73°
London	Partly Cloudy	48° / 39°
Los Angeles	Sunny	73° / 55°
Manila	Showers	88° / 79°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	72° / 46°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	81° / 74°
New York	Partly Cloudy	54° / 45°
Osaka	Sunny	63° / 45°
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	48° / 39°
Busan	Sunny	66° / 54°
Rome	Mostly Sunny	63° / 48°
Salem	Thunderstorm	72° / 60°
San Francisco	Rain	62° / 53°
Seoul	Sunny	61° / 43°
Tokyo	Windy	64° / 48°
Washington, DC	Cloudy	52° / 41°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
3:10 AM	Low Tide	-0.55
10:28 AM	High Tide	1.76
3:44 PM	Low Tide	1.24
8:17 PM	High Tide	1.71

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Bautista now general manager of HARAC

Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car has a new general manager after the promotion of Mary Grace Bautista last Sept. 29. She succeeds Simon Odoca who has returned to Guam.

Baustista

Bautista used to serve as the company's Operations/ Marketing (Pacific Region) manager.

Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car president Soledad T. Quan congratulated her on the promotion, stating that Bautista has years of experience working in the rental car industry, especially managing the entire operations of multiple rental car locations.

"She is a savvy veteran who understands the needs, wants of the different target demographics, and knows what it takes to thrive in this saturated rental car market. While relatively new to the Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car family, it was an easy decision that Grace would be able to fill the position of general manager. We are grateful for her willingness to accept the position and know that HARAC will continue to grow in her hands,"

A native of Makati City, Philippines, Baustista admitted that, at first, she was unsure what to think about the promotion to be the head of the Joeten Group of Companies' rental car subsidiary.

"I felt a little apprehensive and, at the same time, a bit overwhelmed because of the staffing shortage we are faced with. However, I am happy and up for the challenge. With my years of experience in the car rental industry and the knowledge and experience I bring, I know, and I believe, together with my team, we can achieve more. Myself and my team, we have always been proactive about pushing ourselves forward. We all have the same mindset, being results-driven and we deliver above-expectation customer service and results every time," said Bautista.

With the help of erstwhile general manager Odoca and the rest of the Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car, Bautista has improved the efficiency and helped increase the profit goals at the Oleai-based car rental company.

"We have also repeatedly proven that we are willing to lend a helping hand to everyone when needed."

As for her plans now that she's the general manager, Bautista looks to maintain the company's sustainable growth, expand its market to include Tinian and Rota, increase market share, and make Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car the leader in this industry within the CNMI.

"In a very short period, we have managed to become a major player in the tourism market, catering primarily to the Korean and Japanese markets. As new markets open, we hope to aggressively pursue new markets."

Prior to joining Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car, Bautista was already a staple in the car rental industry since 2015 and held various management positions starting with National-Alamo-Enterprise, Avis-Budget-Payless, and Islander

Before making the jump to the car rental industry, she held a management position at LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort for 12 years.

Bautista graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Marketing from the University of the East in Manila, Philippines.

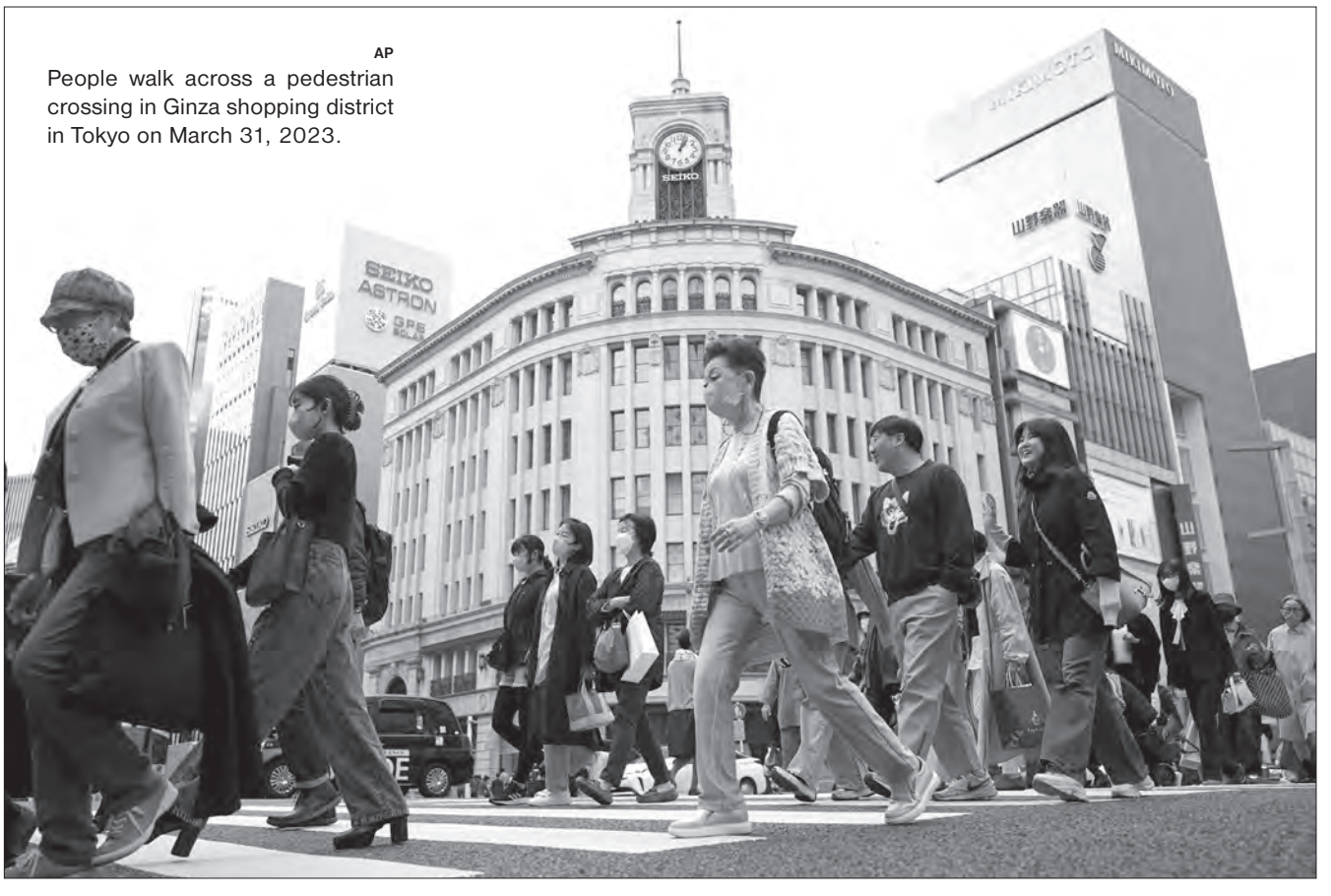
Happily married with three children, Bautista is also the president and the founder of M2 Fitness, a nonprofit fitness organization in the CNMI that offers a variety of free classes including Zumba.

"I enjoy helping in the community and this is my reason for being a member of the Rotary Club of Saipan and Saipan Marianas Lions Club. I also enjoy traveling and experiencing what other cultures have to offer."

For more information on Hafa Adai Rent-A-Car, call their office inside the Joeten Motors Ford and Honda showroom at (670) 234-5567 or their 24-hour car rental office at the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport at (670) 288-0087.

Japan's economy sinks into contraction as spending, investment decline

AP
People walk across a pedestrian crossing in Ginza shopping district in Tokyo on March 31, 2023.



TOKYO (AP)—Japan's economy slipped into a contraction in the third quarter, decreasing at an annual pace of 2.1% as consumption and investments shrank, the government reported Wednesday.

Real gross domestic product, which measures the total value of a nation's products and services, fell 0.5% in the July-September period for the world's third largest economy, the Cabinet Office said. That would produce a 2.1% drop if the quarter's performance continued for a full 12 months.

The downturn came after the economy grew a revised 3.7% in the first quarter and a revised 4.5% in the second quarter on an annualized basis, according to the government figures.

The third quarter's performance was far worse than what had been expected, according to the financial services company ING, which had forecast an annual contraction of 0.5%.

"Most of the miss in the consensus forecast came from weaker-than-expected domestic demand items, such as consumer spending, business investment and inventory accumulation," Robert Carnell, ING's head of research for the Asia-Pacific area, said in a report.

Private consumption shrank an annualized 0.2% during the quarter, while corporate investment decreased 2.5%.

Economic activity in the previous two quarters got a boost from recovering exports and inbound tourism. Social restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic have gradually eased, allowing for more travel and a fix to the crimped supply chain for production.

Exports managed to eke out 0.5% growth in the latest quarter, in contrast to a 3.2% rise in the second quater. Auto exports have recovered after stalling over the shortage of computer chips and other parts. Also adding to exports was tourism revenue.

Public demand, which includes government spending, rose at an annual pace of 0.6% in the latest quarter.

Given the numbers, Japan's central bank isn't likely to consider any move toward higher interest rates.

The Bank of Japan has taken a super-easy monetary policy for years, with zero or below-zero interest rates aimed at energizing an economy long beset by deflation, which reflects the stagnation that has plagued Japan with its aging and shrinking population.

Some analysts said the sharp contraction could be temporary.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida has pushed a 17 trillion yen ($113 billion) stimulus package, including tax cuts and household subsidies. A supplementary budget for its funding recently won parliamentary approval.

Biden: Goal for Xi meeting is to get US-China communications back to 'normal'

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—President Joe Biden and China's Xi Jinping swept into San Francisco on Tuesday as the two leaders made their final preparations for their first engagement in a year at a historic estate outside of the city.

Biden expressed hope that the talks would help put a shaky U.S.-China relationship—marked by sharp differences over the last year—in a better place. The two leaders arrived in the city to be greeted by hundreds of demonstrators who lined up along their motorcade routes, waving Chinese, Taiwanese and Tibetan flags as well as signs in support of and opposition to the Chinese leader.

Biden, before leaving Washington to make his way West on Tuesday to attend this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, said his broad goal was to get Washington and Beijing "on a normal course corresponding" once again even as they have sharp differences on no shortage of issues.

"Being able to pick up the phone and talk to one another if there's a crisis. Being able to make sure our militaries still have contact with one another," Biden told reporters at the White House. "We're not trying to decouple from China, but what we're trying to do is change the relationship for the better."

The two leaders will meet at Filoli Estate, a country house museum about 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of San Francisco, according to three senior administration officials. The officials requested anonymity to discuss the venue, which has not yet been confirmed by the White House and Chinese government.

Separately, a U.S. official confirmed that Biden and Xi are expected to announce an agreement that would restore talks under what's known as the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement. The agreement is used by the U.S. and People's Liberation Army navies and air forces to improve safety in the air and sea. Until 2020, they had been meeting regularly since 1998 for the talks. The official requested anonymity to preview the expected leaders' announcement.

Biden arrived at San Francisco International Airport Tuesday afternoon and Xi landed shortly after. The Chinese president was welcomed on the tarmac by Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, California Gov. Gavin Newsom and U.S. Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns.

Hundreds of onlookers gathered on the leaders' motorcade route, some holding signs that read "End CCP," the initials of Chinese Communist Party. Another sign read "Warmly Welcome President Xi Jinping" and was affixed to concrete bollards.

Pro-China and anti-China demonstrators also gathered near the Moscone Center, the venue where many APEC meetings were being held.

Beijing supporters waved U.S. and Chinese flags as they waited for Xi's motorcade to arrive at the swanky hotel near the convention center where the Chinese delegation is staying. Several supporters used oversized Chinese national flags to obscure the few Xi critics there and used loudspeakers to play the patriotic "Ode to the Motherland."

Scuffles broke out between the two groups, but police quickly intervened to maintain order. The crowds were kept out of the road by tall, metal barriers.

Wei Gong, of Charlottesville, Virginia, brought her 9-year-old daughter, Deanna Wei, to welcome Xi. Her child wore a traditional Chinese, horse-face skirt and held U.S. and Chinese flags.

"I have never seen him," the mother said of Xi. "We just want to see him."

Nation

House votes to prevent gov't shutdown

» As GOP Speaker Johnson relies on Democrats for help

AP
Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., speaks during a news conference at the Capitol in Washington, Nov. 2, 2023.

WASHINGTON (AP)—The House voted overwhelmingly Tuesday to prevent a government shutdown after new Republican Speaker Mike Johnson was forced to reach across the aisle to Democrats when hard-right conservatives revolted against his plan.

Johnson's proposal to temporarily fund the government into the new year passed on a bipartisan 336-95 tally, but 93 Republicans voted against it. It was the first time the new speaker had to force vital legislation through the House, and he showed a willingness to leave his right-flank Republicans behind—the same political move that cost the last House speaker, Kevin McCarthy, his job just weeks ago.

For now, Johnson of Louisiana appeared on track for a better outcome. His approach, which the Senate is expected to approve by week's end, effectively pushes a final showdown over government funding to the new year.

"Making sure that government stays in operation is a matter of conscience for all of us. We owe that to the American people," Johnson said earlier Tuesday at a news conference at the Capitol.

The new Republican leader faced the same political problem that led to McCarthy's ouster—angry, frustrated, hard-right GOP lawmakers rejected his approach, demanded budget cuts and voted against the plan. Rather than the applause and handshakes that usually follow passage of a bill, several hardline conservatives animatedly confronted the speaker as they exited the chamber.

Without enough support from his Republican majority, Johnson had little choice but to rely on Democrats to ensure passage to keep the federal government running.

Johnson's proposal puts forward a unique—critics say bizarre—two-part process that temporarily funds some federal agencies to Jan. 19 and others to Feb. 2. It's a continuing resolution, or CR, that comes without any of the deep cuts conservatives have demanded all year. It also fails to include President Joe Biden's request for nearly $106 billion for Ukraine, Israel, border security and other supplemental funds.

"We're not surrendering," Johnson assured after a closed-door meeting of House Republicans Tuesday morning, vowing he would not support another stopgap. "But you have to choose fights you can win."

Johnson, who announced his endorsement Tuesday of Donald Trump as the Republican nominee for president, hit the airwaves to sell his approach and met privately Monday night with the conservative Freedom Caucus.

Johnson says the innovative approach would position House Republicans to "go into the fight" for deeper spending cuts in the new year, but many Republicans are skeptical there will be any better outcome in January.

Rep. Chip Roy, a Texas Republican who is part of the House Freedom Caucus, did not hold back on his opinion of the stopgap bill: "It's crap."

He said he would give "a little bit of room" to Johnson, who is three weeks into the job of speaker. But Roy threatened to seize control of the House floor if conservative demands for cuts are not met in the months ahead.

The opposition from hardline conservatives left Johnson with few other options than to skip what's typically a party-only procedural vote, and rely on another process that requires a two-thirds tally with Democrats for passage.

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries said Democrats were willing to find common ground with Republicans "while pushing back against Republican extremism whenever necessary."

In a statement with the other the top Democratic leaders, Jeffries pointed out that a federal shutdown "would hurt the economy, our national security and everyday Americans." He had noted in a letter to colleagues that the GOP package met Democratic demands to keep funding at current levels without steep reductions or divisive Republican policy priorities.

Illegal border crossings into the US drop in Oct. after 3-month streak of increases

WASHINGTON (AP)—Illegal border crossings from Mexico fell 14% in October from a month earlier, U.S. authorities said Tuesday, ending a three-month streak of big increases.

U.S. officials highlighted the resumption of deportation flights to Venezuela on Oct. 18, shortly after Venezuelans replaced Mexicans as the largest nationality appearing at the border. Arrests of Venezuelans plummeted 45% to 29,637 from 54,833, still second only to Mexicans. Arrests of Venezuelans fell even more, by 74%, in the second half of October from the same period of September.

Arrests for illegal crossings totaled 188,778 for all nationalities in October, down from 218,763 in September, which was the second-highest month on record. Arrests had more than doubled over the previous three months as migrants and smugglers adjusted to new asylum regulations introduced in May.

Arrests of Chinese rose slightly to 4,247, with 99% of them in the San Diego area, as more fly to Ecuador and make their way to the U.S. border amid a faltering economy at home.

"We continue to enhance our border security posture and remain vigilant," said Troy Miller, the acting CBP commissioner, who urged Congress to approve President Joe Biden's supplemental budget request for $13.6 billion in border-related spending.

While crossings remain unusually high, the monthly decline is a rare piece of welcome news for a White House that has been criticized on the right and left flanks for its immigration policies. Panama has yet to release October figures for crossings through the notorious Darién jungle, which totaled more than 400,000 during the first nine months of the year, largely Venezuelans.

Biden, a Democrat, has adopted an approach at the border that combines new legal pathways to enter the country with more restrictions on asylum for those who cross the border illegally. Including those legal pathways, migrants crossed the border 240,988 times in October, down 11% from 269,735 in September.

More than 44,000 people entered from Mexico with appointments on the CBP One mobile app, bringing the total number of scheduled appointments on the app to 324,000 since it was introduced in January. Additionally, nearly 270,000 migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela have entered the country by applying online with a financial sponsor and arriving at an airport.

ACROSS THE NATION

Chauvin makes another bid to overturn federal conviction in murder of Floyd

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin is making another attempt to overturn his federal civil rights conviction in the 2020 murder of George Floyd, saying new evidence shows that he didn't cause Floyd's death. In a motion filed in federal court Monday, Chauvin said he never would have pleaded guilty to the charge in 2021 if he had known about the theories of a Kansas pathologist with whom he began corresponding in February. Chauvin is asking the judge who presided over his trial to throw out his conviction and order a new trial, or at least an evidentiary hearing. Floyd, who was Black, died on May 25, 2020, after Chauvin, who is white, kneeled on his neck for 9 1/2 minutes on the street outside a convenience store where Floyd tried to pass a counterfeit $20 bill. A bystander video captured Floyd's fading cries of "I can't breathe." Floyd's death touched off protests worldwide, some of which turned violent, and forced a national reckoning with police brutality and racism. Chauvin, who is serving a 21-year sentence at a federal prison in Arizona, filed the request without a lawyer. He says Dr. William Schaetzel, of Topeka, Kansas, told him that he believes Floyd died not from asphyxia from Chauvin's actions, but from complications of a rare tumor called a paraganglioma that can cause a fatal surge of adrenaline. The pathologist did not examine Floyd's body but reviewed autopsy reports.

Ohio interstate crash involving busload of HS students leaves 6 dead, 18 injured

ETNA, Ohio (AP)—A charter bus filled with high school students was rear-ended by a semitruck on an Ohio highway Tuesday morning, leaving six people dead and 18 injured, officials said. Five vehicles were involved in the crash, including a Pioneer Trails charter bus carrying students and chaperones from the Tuscarawas Valley Local School District in eastern Ohio, said Licking County Emergency Management Agency Director Sean Grady. Three passengers on the bus, which was carrying a driver and 54 students and chaperones, were pronounced dead at the scene, the Ohio State Highway Patrol said Tuesday night. They were identified as John W. Mosely, 18, of Mineral City; Jeffery D. Worrell, 18, of Bolivar; and Katelyn N. Owens, 15, of Mineral City. "This is our worst nightmare, when we have a bus full of children involved in a crash," Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said during a news conference at the scene. "Prayers go out to the families, everyone who was on the bus."

Tens of thousands of supporters of Israel rally in Washington, crying 'never again'

WASHINGTON (AP)—Supporters of Israel rallied by the tens of thousands on the National Mall under heavy security Tuesday, voicing solidarity in the fight against Hamas and crying "never again." The "March for Israel" offered a resounding and bipartisan endorsement of one of America's closest allies as criticism has intensified over Israel's offensive in Gaza, set off by the bloody Hamas incursion on Oct. 7. Overlooking a sea of Israeli and U.S. flags, the top Democrats in Congress—Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic leader Hakeem Jefferies—came together on the stage with Republicans Mike Johnson, the House speaker, and Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa. They joined hands as Schumer chanted, "We stand with Israel."

Asia

FOR INTERMEDIATE-RANGE BALLISTIC MISSILES

N. Korea says it tested new solid-fuel engines

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea said Wednesday it successfully tested new solid-fuel engines designed for intermediate-range ballistic missiles as it continues to work on developing nuclear-capable weapons targeting its rivals in the region.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said the country's military scientists tested the first-stage and second-stage missile engines on Saturday and Tuesday. The report did not say when the new missile system was expected to be completed.

The North's existing intermediate-range missiles, including the Hwasong-12 that may be able to reach the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam, are powered by liquid-fuel engines, which need to be fueled before launch and cannot stay fueled for long periods of time.

Missiles with built-in solid propellants can be made ready to launch faster and are easier to move and conceal, which theoretically makes it harder for adversaries to detect and preempt the launch in advance.

The recent tests were an "essential process for further enhancing the strategic offensive capabilities of (North Korea's) armed forces in the light of the grave and unstable security environment facing the country and the future military situation in the region, in which the enemies will get more vicious in their military collusion and nexus," KCNA said.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula are at their highest point in years after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un ramped up his weapons demonstrations, including events he described as simulated nuclear attacks on the South. He also authorized his military to launch preemptive nuclear strikes against enemies if it perceives Pyongyang's top leadership to be under threat.

South Korea has responded by expanding its combined military exercises with the United States, which Kim has condemned as invasion rehearsals, and enhancing trilateral security cooperation with Japan. Seoul is also seeking stronger public assurances from Washington that it would swiftly and decisively use U.S. nuclear weapons to protect the South in case of a North Korean nuclear attack.

During their annual security talks this week, U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and South Korean Defense Minister Shin Won-sik signed an updated a bilateral security agreement with the aim of more effectively countering North Korea's evolving nuclear and missile threats.

Shin said the new document spells out that the United States would mobilize its full range of military capabilities, including nuclear, to defend the South in the event of a North Korean nuclear attack. He also said the document will be a template for the allies to strategize how South Korea could assist U.S. nuclear operations in such events with its conventional capabilities but didn't elaborate further.

North Korea earlier this year revealed its first solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile, the Hwasong-18, which has the potential ability to reach deep into the U.S. mainland.

Analysts say the North has to clear further technological hurdles to have a viable nuclear arsenal that could threaten the United States.

All of North Korea's ICBM tests so far were done at high angles to avoid the territory of neighbors, so it's not yet clear whether the country has mastered the technology to ensure its warheads would survive atmospheric reentry well enough to precisely hit their targets.

North Korea's claims that the engine tests were successful suggest the country will flight-test the new missile in coming weeks, said Cheong Seong-Chang, an analyst at the private Sejong Institute in South Korea. The missile could pose a potential threat to Guam, a major U.S. military hub, and to American military bases in Japan, which may add to Japan's urgency to upgrade its military and further expand three-way security cooperation with Seoul and Washington, Cheong said.

Some of 40 workers trapped in India tunnel collapse sick

» As debris and glitches delay rescue

LUCKNOW, India (AP)—Some of the 40 construction workers trapped in a collapsed road tunnel for a fourth day were sick as falling debris and technical glitches delayed the work to free them, officials in northern India said Wednesday.

Wide pipes are set to be drilled through excavated rubble to create a passage to free the workers trapped since Sunday when a portion of the under-construction road collapsed in mountainous Uttarakhand state.

That is testing the patience of the relatives and friends of the trapped workers gathering outside the tunnel who are growing frustrated and angry with reports that some workers were falling sick.

Magistrate Abhishek Ruhela said some workers have sent messages that they are suffering from fever, body aches, and nervousness. Medicine has been sent through pipes that were set up earlier to get water and food to the workers.

"Essential eatables such as gram and almonds are being sent through the same channels," Ruhela said.

Two of the workers also were reported to have minor injuries from the falling debris.

Most of the workers are migrant laborers from across India.

About 200 disaster relief personnel are using drilling equipment and excavators in the rescue operation. Steel pipes 2.5-foot (0.76 meter) wide, which arrived at the site Tuesday, will be pushed through an opening of excavated debris with the help of hydraulic jacks to safely pull out the stranded workers.

Gaurav Singh, a state government official, said the rescue operation was delayed because of a technical fault in the drilling machine, but a new machine has been installed.

Falling debris also had delayed the start of the drilling on Tuesday. "These are challenges in such rescue operations, but we will overcome them," Ranjit Sinha, a disaster management official, said.

A landslide Sunday caused a portion of the 4.5-kilometer (2.7-mile) tunnel to collapse about 200 meters (500 feet) from the entrance. It is a hilly tract of land, prone to landslide and subsidence.

Uttarakhand is a mountainous state dotted with Hindu temples that attract many pilgrims and tourists and construction of highways and buildings has been constant to accommodate the influx. The tunnel is part of the busy Chardham all-weather road, a flagship federal project connecting various Hindu pilgrimage sites.

World

Israeli military storms Gaza's largest hospital

AP

Israeli forces raid a Palestinian town of Tulkarem, West Bank, Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023.

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP)—The Israeli military raided Gaza's largest hospital early Wednesday, conducting what it called a targeted operation against Hamas as troops seized broader control of northern Gaza, including capturing the territory's legislature building and its police headquarters.

In recent days, the focus of the war has been Shifa Hospital, with hundreds of patients, staff and displaced people trapped inside. Shifa had stopped operations over the weekend, as its supplies dwindled and a lack of electricity left it no way to run incubators and other lifesaving equipment. After days without refrigeration, morgue stuff dug a mass grave Tuesday for 120 bodies in the yard.

Amid the standoff, the hospital in the center of Gaza City became a focal point of clashing narratives about the war, now in its sixth week. Israel claims Hamas is using civilians as human shields, while Palestinians, rights group and international critics say Israel is recklessly harming civilians.

The Israeli military said early Wednesday that it raided specific areas of the sprawling Shifa complex, while trying to avoid harming civilians. The statement gave no further details.

Israel has long alleged that the militants conceal military assets in the facility and other hospitals, a claim denied by Hamas and medical staff.

Elsewhere, the Palestinian Red Crescent said Tuesday it had evacuated patients, doctors and displaced families from another Gaza City hospital, Al-Quds.

Israel vowed to end Hamas rule in Gaza after the Oct. 7 attack, which killed some 1,200 people and resulted in the taking of roughly 240 hostages. The Israeli government has acknowledged it doesn't know what it would do with the territory long-term after Hamas' defeat.

The Israeli onslaught has been disastrous for Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians.

More than 11,200 people, two-thirds of them women and minors, have been killed in Gaza, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry in Ramallah. About 2,700 people have been reported missing. The ministry's count does not differentiate between civilian and militant deaths.

Almost the entire population of Gaza has squeezed into the southern two-thirds of the tiny territory, where conditions have been deteriorating as bombardment there continues. About 200,000 fled the north in recent days, the U.N. said Tuesday, though tens of thousands are believed to remain.

EU struggling to produce and send ammunition promised to Ukraine

BRUSSELS (AP)—European Union nations acknowledged Tuesday that they may be on the way to failing Ukraine on their promise of providing the ammunition the country dearly needs to stave off Russia's invasion and to win back occupied territory.

With much fanfare early this year, EU leaders promised to provide 1 million rounds of ammunition to Ukraine's front line by spring 2024, an amount goal that would have amounted to a serious ramp-up of production.

But the 27-nation bloc, for over half a century steeped in a "peace, not war" message and sheltering under a U.S. military umbrella, is finding it tough to come up with the goods.

"The 1 million will not be reached, you have to assume that," German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said.

After a Tuesday meeting of EU defense and foreign affairs ministers in Brussels, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell also cast doubt on the goal. "So maybe by March we will not have the 1 million shots," Borrell said.

Estonia's defense minister, Hanno Pevkur, said it was crucial to ramp up supply of the ammunition.

"Look at Russia. They are producing today more than ever. They are getting shells from North Korea. Europe cannot say that ... 'Russia and North Korea can deliver and we cannot,'" he said.

Some 300,000 rounds have been delivered from existing stocks in the EU so far. With the rest becoming increasingly elusive to source before spring, Latvian Defense Minister Andris Spruds insisted the original target should not be taken too literally.

"Well, of course, 1 million rounds are symbolic. I think aspiration and ambition is important," he said.

Environment

Worsening warming is hurting people in all regions, US climate assessment shows

By SETH BORENSTEIN and TAMMY WEBBER
Associated Press

JOSHUA A. BICKEL
The bank of the Mississippi River is seen, Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023, near Cairo, Ill. Parts of the Mississippi River have been at historic lows after drought conditions have persisted this fall.

Revved-up climate change now permeates Americans' daily lives with harm that is "already far-reaching and worsening across every region of the United States," a massive new government report says.

The National Climate Assessment, which comes out every four to five years, was released Tuesday with details that bring climate change's impacts down to a local level. Unveiling the report at the White House, President Joe Biden blasted Republican legislators and his predecessor for disputing global warming.

"Anyone who willfully denies the impact of climate change is condemning the American people to a very dangerous future. Impacts are only going to get worse, more frequent, more ferocious and more costly," Biden said, noting that disasters cost the country $178 billion last year. "None of this is inevitable."

Overall, Tuesday's assessment paints a picture of a country warming about 60% faster than the world as a whole, one that regularly gets smacked with costly weather disasters and faces even bigger problems in the future.

Since 1970, the Lower 48 states have warmed by 2.5 degrees (1.4 degrees Celsius) and Alaska has heated up by 4.2 degrees (2.3 degrees Celsius), compared to the global average of 1.7 degrees (0.9 degrees Celsius), the report said. But what people really feel is not the averages, but when weather is extreme.

With heat waves, drought, wildfire and heavy downpours, "we are seeing an acceleration of the impacts of climate change in the United States," said study co-author Zeke Hausfather of the tech company Stripe and Berkeley Earth.

And that's not healthy.

Climate change is "harming physical, mental, spiritual, and community health and well-being through the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme events, increasing cases of infectious and vector-borne diseases, and declines in food and water quality and security," the report said.

Compared to earlier national assessments, this year's uses far stronger language and "unequivocally" blames the burning of coal, oil and gas for climate change.

The 37-chapter assessment includes an interactive atlas that zooms down to the county level. It finds that climate change is affecting people's security, health and livelihoods in every corner of the country in different ways, with minority and Native American communities often disproportionately at risk.

In Alaska, which is warming two to three times faster than the global average, reduced snowpack, shrinking glaciers, thawing permafrost, acidifying oceans and disappearing sea ice have affected everything from the state's growing season, to hunting and fishing, with projections raising questions about whether some Indigenous communities should be relocated.

The Southwest is experiencing more drought and extreme heat – including 31 consecutive days this summer when Phoenix's daily high temperatures reached or exceeded 110 degrees – reducing water supplies and increasing wildfire risk.

Northeastern cities are seeing more extreme heat, flooding and poor air quality, as well as risks to infrastructure, while drought and floods exacerbated by climate change threaten farming and ecosystems in rural areas.

In the Midwest, both extreme drought and flooding threaten crops and animal production, which can affect the global food supply.

In the northern Great Plains, weather extremes like drought and flooding, as well as declining water resources, threaten an economy dependent largely on crops, cattle, energy production and recreation. Meanwhile, water shortages in parts of the southern Great Plains are projected to worsen, while high temperatures are expected to break records in all three states by midcentury.]

In the Southeast, minority and Native American communities — who may live in areas with higher exposures to extreme heat, pollution and flooding — have fewer resources to prepare for or to escape the effects of climate change.

In the Northwest, hotter days and nights that don't cool down much have resulted in drier streams and less snowpack, leading to increased risk of drought and wildfires. The climate disturbance has also brought damaging extreme rain.

Hawaii and other Pacific islands, as well as the U.S. Caribbean, are increasingly vulnerable to the extremes of drought and heavy rain as well as sea level rise and natural disaster as temperatures warm.]

The United States will warm in the future about 40% more than the world as a total, the assessment said. The AP calculated, using others' global projections, that that means America would get about 3.8 degrees (2.1 degrees Celsius) hotter by the end of the century.

Hotter average temperatures means weather that is even more extreme.

"The news is not good, but it is also not surprising," said University of Colorado's Waleed Abdalati, a former NASA chief scientist who was not part of this report. "What we are seeing is a manifestation of changes that were anticipated over the last few decades."

The 2,200-page report comes after five straight months when the globe set monthly and daily heat records. It comes as the U.S. has set a record with 25 different weather disasters this year that caused at least $1 billion in damage.

Hawaii wildfire burning rainforest on Oahu

HONOLULU (AP)—A wildfire burning in a remote Hawaii rainforest is underscoring a new reality for the normally lush island state just a few months after a devastating blaze on a neighboring island leveled an entire town and killed at least 99 people.

No one was injured and no homes burned in the latest fire, which scorched mountain ridges on Oahu, but the flames wiped out irreplaceable native forestland that's home to nearly two dozen fragile species. And overall, the ingredients are the same as they were in Maui's historic town of Lahaina: severe drought fueled by climate change is creating fire in Hawaii where it has almost never been before.

"It was really beautiful native forest," said JC Watson, the manager of the Koolau Mountains Watershed Partnership, which helps take care of the land. He recalled it had uluhe fern, which often dominate Hawaii rainforests, and koa trees whose wood has traditionally been used to make canoes, surfboards and ukuleles.

"It's not a full-on clean burn, but it is pretty moonscape-looking out there," Watson said.

The fact that this fire was on Oahu's wetter, windward side is a "red flag to all of us that there is change afoot," said Sam 'Ohu Gon III, senior scientist and cultural adviser at The Nature Conservancy in Hawaii.

The fire mostly burned inside the Oahu Forest National Wildlife Refuge, which is home to 22 species listed as endangered or threatened by the U.S. government. They include iiwi and elepaio birds, a tree snail called pupu kani oe and the Hawaiian hoary bat, also known as opeapea. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the refuge, does not know yet what plants or wildlife may have been damaged or harmed by the fire, spokesperson Kristen Oleyte-Velasco said.

DAN DENNISON/HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES VIA AP
This photo provided by the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources shows an Honolulu Fire Department helicopter carrying water to douse a wildfire burning east of Mililani, Hawaii, on Thursday, Nov. 2, 2023.

The fire incinerated 2.5 square miles (6.5 square kilometers) since first being spotted on Oct. 30 and was 90% contained as of Friday. Officials were investigating the cause of the blaze roughly 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of Honolulu.

The flames left gaping, dark bald spots amid a blanket of thick green where the fire did not burn. The skeletons of blackened trees poked from the charred landscape.

The burn area may seem relatively small compared to wildfires on the U.S. continent, which can raze hundreds of square miles. But Hawaii's intact native ecosystems aren't large to begin with, especially on smaller islands like Oahu, so even limited fires have far-reaching consequences.

One major concern is what plants will grow in place of the native forest.

Hawaii's native plants evolved without encountering regular fires and fire is not part of their natural life cycle. Faster-growing non-native plants with more seeds tend to sprout in place of native species afterward.

Watson said an Oahu forest near the latest fire had uluhe ferns, koa trees and ohia trees before a blaze burned less than a square mile of it 2015. Now the land features invasive grasses that are more fire-prone, and some slow-growing koa.

A much larger 2016 fire in the Waianae mountains on the other side of Oahu took out one of the last remaining populations of a rare tree gardenia, said Gon.

There are cultural losses when native forest burns. Gon recalled an old Central Oahu story about a warrior who was thrown off a cliff while battling an enemy chief. His fall was stopped by an ohia tree, another plant common in the incinerated area. Feathers from Hawaii's forest birds were once used to make cloaks and helmets worn by chiefs.

Watson's organization is coordinating with the Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct initial surveys of the damage. They'll devise a restoration plan that will include invasive species control and planting native species. But there are limits to what can be done.

"It'll never be able to be returned to its previous state within our lifetimes," Watson said. "It's forever changed, unfortunately."

The Mililani Mauka fi- renamed after the area near where the fire beganburned in the Koolau mountains. These mountains are on Oahu's wetter, windward side because they trap moisture and rain that move across the island from the northeast.

But repeated and more prolonged episodes of drought are making even the Koolaus dry. Gon expects more frequent Koolau fires in the future.

Life & Style

BBC: 2 more complaints about Russell Brand's behavior

LONDON (AP)—The BBC said Tuesday two more people have come forward to complain about Russell Brand since the broadcaster launched a review into the actor and comedian's behavior.

Brand

The BBC was giving an update to its investigation after British media outlets in September published claims by four women that they were sexually assaulted by Brand between 2006 and 2013, at the height of his fame.

Brand, 48, has denied the allegations.

The comedian worked as a BBC radio presenter from 2006 to 2008. The broadcaster said it recorded a total of five complaints against Brand, including two people who raised complaints and concerns during the time Brand worked there and again after he left the corporation.

Another person made a separate complaint after Brand's departure, and two further people have come forward since the BBC launched its investigation in September.

The broadcaster's statement from Peter Johnston, its director of editorial complaints, did not specify the nature of the latest allegations. But its news website reported that they are "understood to relate to his workplace conduct, and are not of a serious sexual nature."

The claims against Brand, published in September by The Times and Sunday Times newspapers and in a Channel 4 documentary, include allegations that Brand sexually assaulted one woman during a relationship with him when she was 16. Another woman says Brand raped her in Los Angeles in 2012. The accusers have not been named.

Referring to allegations from one of the women that Brand used BBC cars to drive her from school to his home when she was 16, the broadcaster said it no longer had its records of car bookings from the time.

It said investigations are ongoing.

"Although my work is in no way complete and therefore I cannot yet reach any conclusions, it would appear that no disciplinary action was taken against Russell Brand during his engagement with the BBC in 2006-8 prior to his departure from the BBC," Johnston said.

Two U.K. police forces, the Metropolitan Police and Thames Valley Police, launched investigations against Brand after the claims were published.

Brand has issued a statement saying his relationships were "always consensual."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Jesmyn Ward's 'Let Us Descend' is among the finalists for an Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence

NEW YORK (AP)—Jesmyn Ward's slave narrative "Let Us Descend" and Jake Bittle's exploration of climate change's impact "The Great Displacement" are among the finalists for the Andrew Carnegie Medals for Excellence. The medals are presented by the American Library Association and given for fiction and nonfiction, with winners in each category receiving $5,000. On Tuesday, the library association announced that Ward's novel was a fiction nominee, along with Amanda Peters' "The Berry Pickers" and the mixed media "Denison Avenue," by author Christina Wong and illustrator Daniel Innes. In nonfiction, the finalists are Bittle's "The Great Displacement," Darrin Bell's memoir "The Talk" and Roxana Robinson's investigation into the foster system, "We Were Once a Family: A Story of Love, Death, and Child Removal in America." Finalists will be announced Jan. 20.

YouTube creators will soon have to disclose use of gen AI in videos or risk suspension

YouTube is rolling out new rules for AI content, including a requirement that creators reveal whether they've used generative artificial intelligence to make realistic looking videos. In a blog post Tuesday outlining a number of AI-related policy updates, YouTube said creators that don't disclose whether they've used AI tools to make "altered or synthetic" videos face penalties including having their content removed or suspension from the platform's revenue sharing program. "Generative AI has the potential to unlock creativity on YouTube and transform the experience for viewers and creators on our platform," Jennifer Flannery O'Connor and Emily Moxley, vice presidents for product management, wrote in the blog post. "But just as important, these opportunities must be balanced with our responsibility to protect the YouTube community." The restrictions expand on rules that YouTube's parent company, Google, unveiled in September requiring that political ads on YouTube and other Google platforms using artificial intelligence come with a prominent warning label. ***(AP)***

Salman Rushdie receives first-ever Lifetime Disturbing the Peace Award

NEW YORK (AP)—The latest honor for Salman Rushdie was a prize kept secret until minutes before he rose from his seat to accept it. On Tuesday night, the author received the first-ever Lifetime Disturbing the Peace Award, presented by the Vaclav Havel Center on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Only a handful of the more than 100 attendees had advance notice about Rushdie, whose whereabouts have largely been withheld from the general public since he was stabbed repeatedly in August of 2022 during a literary festival in Western New York. "I apologize for being a mystery guest," Rushdie said Tuesday night after being introduced by "Reading Lolita in Tehran" author Azar Nafisi. "I don't feel at all mysterious. But it made life a little simpler." The Havel center, founded in 2012 as the Vaclav Havel Library Foundation, is named for the Czech playwright and dissident who became the last president of Czechoslovakia after the fall of the Communist regime in the late 1980s. The center has a mission to advance the legacy of Havel, who died in 2011 and was known for championing human rights and free expression. Numerous writers and diplomats attended Tuesday's ceremony, hosted by longtime CBS journalist Lesley Stahl.

Vegas Strip remade for its turn hosting Formula One

LAS VEGAS (AP)—The famous fountains at the Bellagio won't be very visible this week amid the roar of Formula One racing on the Las Vegas Strip, and gondoliers won't be serenading tourists at the Venetian resort.

"Fountains have been shut off, canals drained, streets closed or harder to navigate," Michael Green, a University of Nevada, Las Vegas history professor, said after six months of road work and temporary grandstand construction for some of the most monied spectators in sports. "What are they calling it? Stripmageddon? It is clearly causing a lot of uproar."

"But this is a different kind of big event," said Green, who remembers two Grand Prix races held 42 years ago at Caesars Palace. "We're talking about billionaires from around the world. They're going to bring in a ton of money. They're not necessarily the usual tourist."

Organizers, local officials and hotel operators believe the discomfort will be forgotten after racing ends late Saturday. They hope Las Vegas will join Monaco on the leader board of host cities for Grand Prix events around the world.

But predictions of sold-out seats and peak demand for the most expensive grand prix on the F1 calendar may have been overly optimistic. Tickets were still available this week and some hotels have slashed room rates.

Post-race, officials say the Venetian gondola canal will be refilled and casino operator MGM Resorts International has promised to replace Bellagio sidewalk shade trees removed to frame the fountains with thousands of grandstand seats and skybox suites. One worker died during construction.

"I know a lot of people love the fountains," Joshua Guray, a visitor from Long Beach, California, said. "So it's definitely a bummer, I'd say."

For now, many familiar Strip sights are blocked by track barriers, fencing, pedestrian walkway screens, scaffolding and advertising erected around the nighttime race on streets usually choked with taxis, buses and rental cars and lined by pedestrians posing for selfies.

"It's all barricades and things blocking traffic," said Charles Flexer, a tourist from Williamsport, Pennsylvania, who tried to decide how to cross Las Vegas Boulevard with his mother using an electric mobility scooter. "It's very disruptive."

Man strives to put mother's lies behind him

DEAR ABBY: I was born 40 years ago and raised by my mother to believe that her husband was my birth father. She divorced him and raised me while receiving court-awarded child support, based on her insistence to all involved that she had not had an affair. As the years went on, it became increasingly evident this wasn't true, so I took a genetic test. The result came back with a 99% likelihood that I had a different father. I soon made contact with the brother of the man I believed to be my birth father. He had personal knowledge of the affair and did a confirmational genetic test to show his genetic relationship to me.

My mother continues to insist on what is now certainly a lie, perhaps to save face with me and others, and to avoid perjury charges and support repayments that might follow. I have not had contact with her for many years and changed my last name to my biological father's. He was a loving father figure to me in secret and is now deceased.

My problem is, I cannot find closure for all of my mother's countless lies and denials. She gaslighted me into feeling I was deranged while she cultivated a popular public face as a reporter and patron of the arts in our small town. I want to be able to reconcile with my past so I can be a better father to my own kids and be able to trust my loved ones fully. I feel weak as a person, and I don't want to pass that on to my kids. Please advise.

TRUE SELF IN CANADA

DEAR TRUE SELF: You are not a "weak" man. You are an intelligent person who was fed a pack of lies for decades. Yet you managed to get to the truth in spite of that. Your mother has lied because she is afraid she will lose standing in the community, and she is probably right about that. It would benefit you to discuss your family history with a licensed mental health professional. If you do, it will help to sort all this out more quickly than if you try to work through it on your own.

■■■

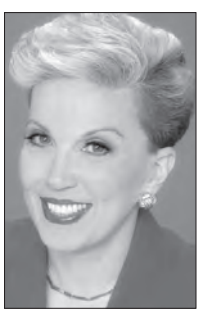
DEAR ABBY: I am torn between my and my husband's desire to move and my obligation to my family. We decided to explore moving out of state because of the climate. Where we currently live is very dry and hot in the summer, and wildfires often cause smoky skies for weeks. We can hardly go outside in the summer.

My widowed mother lives close by and knows how much we struggle in the summer, but she's in her 60s and healthy. (She doesn't need to be taken care of yet.) Now that we've chosen a place to move a few states away, she has convinced my grandmother, who lives out of state and recently went into independent living, to move close to all of us. I'm torn between moving somewhere I feel my quality of life would improve and staying close to my grandmother, who I've never lived near before. How do I make this decision?

MAKING A DECISION IN COLORADO

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR MAKING A DECISION: Decide rationally. If you opt to make the move—which would be understandable—discuss it with your mother. Although her health is strong now, she and your grandmother may be open to the idea of relocating to YOUR new city so you can all be together.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

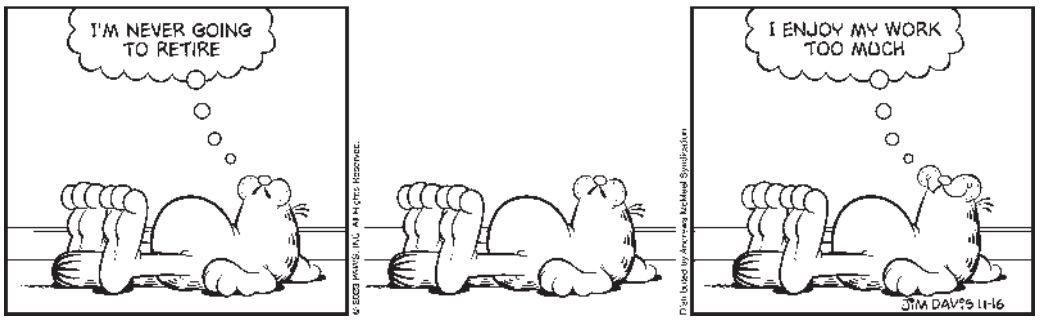
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

WE'LL USE THIS COLANDER FOR THE THINKING CAP! ITS METAL SURFACE CAN CONDUCT ELECTRICAL BRAIN IMPULSES AND REFLECT BRAIN WAVES!
NEXT WE'LL NEED TO ATTACH THOSE INPUT AND OUTPUT STRINGS AND A GROUNDING STRING.
WHY A GROUNDING STRING?
IT'S LIKE A LIGHTNING ROD FOR BRAINSTORMS ..I WANT TO KEEP MY IDEAS GROUNDED IN REALITY.
I THINK YOU'RE TOO LATE.
WE'LL ALSO NEED TO BUILD A TRANSFORMER FOR THE ATOMIC CEREBRAL ENHANCE-O-TRON.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

SO... A REAL JOB! ARE YOU THINKING COPYWRITER OR SOMETHING?
NO. I'M KIND OF DOUBTING MY WRITING NOW.
SO, WHAT'S ON YOUR DREAM LIST?
AMERICAN NINJA WARRIOR? PARTY CLOWN? SURGEON?
THIS IS GOOD START WIDE AND WE'LL START NARROWING.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

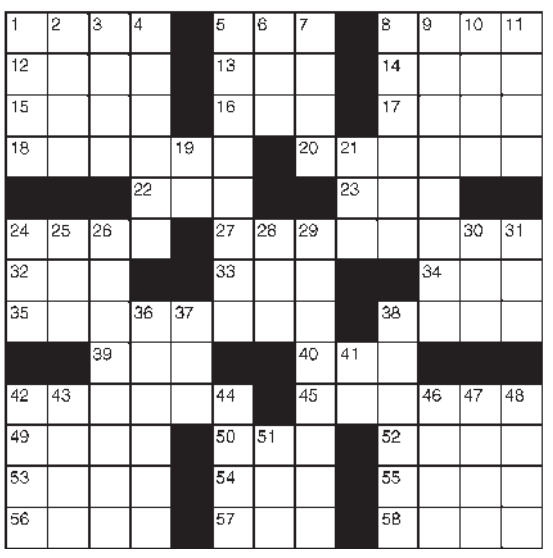
1 Part of speech
5 Vat
8 Mama's mate
12 Sheltered
13 Leading lady?
14 Burden
15 Close
16 Scot's refusal
17 Roman 1601
18 Bug barrier
20 Calcutta currency
22 Use a wok
23 Mal de —
24 Tear canal
27 Imagined
32 The Magic, on scoreboards
33 Sugar suffix
34 Flamenco cheer
35 Instrument in a Dixieland band
38 Winter blanket
39 Wine selection
40 Epoch
42 Less moist, as a brownie
45 Proportions
49 Professional gp.
50 Hosp. hookups
52 Taking action
53 Oxford, for one
54 "O Sole —"
55 Unsightly
56 Dispatch
57 — Salvador
58 Diggs of "Rent"

DOWN

1 Moving vehicles?
2 Power co. supply
3 Caboose
4 Grief-stricken
5 "Locksley Hall" poet
6 A.C.C. school
7 Tavern order
8 Ellen of "Grey's Anatomy"
9 Actress Gillian
10 Brownish purple
11 Unrepaired
19 Hosp. triage area
21 Ballpark figure
24 Medico
25 Web address
26 "Stronger" singer Kelly
28 Employ
29 "Cheers" regular Norm
30 "Strange Magic" gp.
31 Lawn coating
36 Checked
37 Chemical suffix
38 Didn't dance
41 Egyptian sun god
42 Mama — Elliot
43 Tennis champ Arthur
44 Eyeglass frames
46 "Young Frankenstein" role
47 Unctuous
48 Ocular woe
51 Itinerary word

Solution time: 24 mins.

Yesterday's answer 11-16



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Kimberly J. Brown, 39; Maggie Gyllenhaal, 46; Martha Plimpton, 53; Marg Helgenberger, 65.

Happy Birthday: Look for opportunities, make changes that position you to reach your goal and follow your heart. Happiness is your responsibility, and doing what makes you feel good about yourself will ensure you reach your expectations. Put your energy where it counts and you'll reap the rewards you deserve. Surround yourself with people who share your beliefs and contribute to your success. Your numbers are 9, 14, 23, 28, 36, 42, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Limit spending. Use your intelligence to devise different ways to utilize your skills, and you'll find a lucrative and fulfilling path. Refuse to let emotional factors stand between you and what you want to pursue. Take responsibility for your happiness. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* An open mind will help you reach your destination. Don't fear change if it can catapult you to a position that offers clout. Let your ambition take over and your experience and knowledge lead the way. Put your energy where it counts, and prosper. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Someone will mislead you. Go directly to the source if you want to avoid a mistake. Offering false information will compromise your reputation. Self-improvement is in your best interest and will encourage you to listen to experts before you embrace change. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Get out and talk to people in the know and you'll discover what you want to pursue. Preparation will help you overcome any pitfall and ensure you reach your target and make a difference. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Emotions will surface along with opportunities. Weigh the pros and cons, and be sure to discuss your plans with those affected by the decisions you make. Share your vision, listen to complaints and make decisions you can live with mentally, emotionally and financially. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Listen to allies. It will be worthwhile to accommodate complaints with action if you want to maintain peace and finish what you start. Learn from the experience, be open to suggestions and adjust to please the majority, and you will make headway. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* You'll mesmerize those eager to follow a winner, but expect opposition from those who play by different rules. Don't let your integrity slip away when honesty and compassion are necessary if you want your charm to carry you to victory. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Don't take anything for granted. If you want something, it's up to you to make it happen. Trust and believe in yourself and follow through with your plans. A change of heart will help you resolve issues holding you back. Live life your way. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Settle any differences you have amicably and move forward. Make the most of your time and put forth an innovative effort, and you'll attract positive attention. Don't dwell on what you cannot change when you should be embracing what life has to offer. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Implement a healthier lifestyle. A disciplined approach to exercise and maintaining an energetic routine will result in confidence and leadership qualities that will help you advance. Don't let controversy get to you. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Observe the changes going on around you and learn from the mistakes others make. Be aggressive in your approach to investments, and you'll make your money stretch. Update documents, contracts and legal matters that need an adjustment. Physical or medical issues will require thought. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Don't limit your chance to advance or let emotional matters ruin your judgment. Let discipline lead the way, and you'll figure out how to use your skills, knowledge and experience to reach your goal. Listen to your inner voice, not someone trying to sell you something. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are determined, unique and ambitious. You are flexible and intuitive.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	4		8	5	3			
		1	4	6		8		
8	5							6
4	1		2					7
2		9	3		5		8	
3					4	5		2
								3
6	8	4	5	3			2	
1			6	4	2		5	8

Difficulty: ★★★ 11/16

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

1	7	4	5	8	3	9	2	6
3	8	9	4	6	2	5	7	1
5	6	2	1	9	7	4	8	3
9	4	5	3	7	6	2	1	8
7	2	8	9	1	4	6	3	5
6	3	1	8	2	5	7	4	9
4	1	3	2	5	9	8	6	7
2	5	7	6	3	8	1	9	4
8	9	6	7	4	1	3	5	2

Difficulty: ★★★ 11/16

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WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

ROB 'GRONK' GRONKOWSKI **Solution: 9 letters**

P	A	S	S	E	S	R	E	E	N	A	C	C	U	B
D	L	C	D	L	E	I	F	O	O	T	B	A	L	L
E	I	A	R	E	V	I	S	N	E	F	F	O	E	A
T	N	S	Y	O	Y	A	R	D	S	A	C	T	A	O
F	E	E	C	E	B	T	S	F	N	K	S	N	G	G
A	M	T	L	I	R	A	I	S	E	T	P	E	U	N
R	A	I	F	K	Ⓣ	T	T	R	H	U	I	M	E	E
D	N	L	N	Ⓔ	N	S	Y	G	A	P	K	E	P	W
N	O	E	Ⓐ	E	E	A	I	Y	A	H	E	R	A	E
E	R	Ⓜ	S	R	B	L	H	T	H	M	C	I	T	N
T	P	S	N	A	H	C	O	V	A	P	E	T	R	G
H	L	A	P	G	T	W	O	R	H	T	O	E	I	L
G	L	M	I	A	M	H	E	R	S	T	S	R	O	A
I	A	H	C	A	O	C	O	N	T	R	A	C	T	N
T	O	U	C	H	D	O	W	N	O	S	A	E	S	D

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Acrobat, All-Pro, Amherst, Ankle, Blocker, Buccaneers, Catch, Charity, Coach, Contract, Drafted, Elite, Fans, Field, Fitness, Football, Game, Goal, Highlights, League, Lineman, New England, NFL, Offensive, Passes, Patriots, Player, Retirement, Season, Spike, Statistics, Tampa Bay, Team, Throw, Tight End, Touchdown, Trophy, Yards

Yesterday's Answer: Venice

The NEW **TELEWORD VINTAGE COLLECTION EDITION #1** can be purchased on line at www.WonderWordBooks.com. In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Pacers beat 76ers, end Philly's eight-game winning streak

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Tyrese Haliburton had 33 points and 15 assists, and Obi Toppin chipped in 27 points as the Indiana Pacers beat the 76ers 132-126 in an NBA In-Season Tournament game on Tuesday night and snapped Philadelphia's eight-game winning streak.

The Pacers took the upper hand in the tourney's East Group A standings, improving to 2-0 in pool play. The Sixers slipped to 1-1.

Myles Turner added 17 points for the Pacers, whose bench outscored Philadelphia's 33-6.

Joel Embiid scored 39 points and De'Anthony Melton added 30 points. Tyrese Maxey was held to 27 points on 9-of-23 shooting after scoring a career-high 50 points against the Pacers on Sunday.

AP

Indiana Pacers' Bruce Brown goes up for a shot during the first half of an NBA basketball in-season tournament game against the Philadelphia 76ers, Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2023, in Philadelphia.

TIMBERWOLVES 104, WARRIORS 101

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Karl-Anthony Towns scored 33 points, sending Minnesota to its seventh straight victory in a win over Golden State that featured three early ejections on Tuesday night.

With the game scoreless and not yet two minutes old, Golden State's Draymond Green was ejected after putting Minnesota's Rudy Gobert in a headlock. Warriors guard Klay Thompson and Timberwolves forward Jaden McDaniels, who got into a shoving match that resulted in Thompson's jersey being ripped, were also tossed from the game.

Golden State was already without leading scorer Stephen Curry, who was ruled out with right knee soreness.

Towns also grabbed 11 boards, and Gobert had 13. Reigning Western Conference player of the week Anthony Edwards scored 20 points.

Rookie Brandin Podziemski scored a career-high 23 points off the bench and hit three 3-pointers, including a buzzer-beater to end the third quarter, in 39 minutes. Dario Saric added 21 on 6-of-15 shooting.

HEAT 111, HORNETS 105

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Jimmy Butler scored a season-high 32 points, Bam Adebayo had 21 points and 11 rebounds and Miami remained unbeaten in the in-season tournament with a win over short-handed Charlotte.

Duncan Robinson added 18 points for the Heat, who've won six straight overall.

Miami is 2-0 in group play; the Hornets are 1-1.

P.J. Washington had 32 points and six of Charlotte's season-high 15 3-pointers. LaMelo Ball added 28 points, 11 assists and six rebounds.

The Heat finished off a 4-0 road trip that included wins against San Antonio, Atlanta and Memphis.

NUGGETS 111, CLIPPERS 108

DENVER (AP)—Nikola Jokic had 32 points, 16 rebounds and nine assists and Denver beat Los Angeles as the Clippers remained winless since acquiring James Harden last month.

Jokic was perfect on 14 free throw attempts, including two with 13 seconds left that helped the Nuggets hold off the Clippers' comeback try.

Los Angeles has lost five straight with Harden, who was acquired on Oct. 30, and six in a row overall despite the 34-year-old guard's best game with his new team since arriving from Philadelphia.

Harden scored 21 points and Paul George tied a season high with 35 points as Los Angeles fell to 0-2 in West Group B play.

Aaron Gordon scored 20 points and Reggie Jackson 18 for Denver, which has won both of its games in the West B bracket.

LAKERS 134, GRIZZLIES 107

LOS ANGELES (AP)—D'Angelo Russell scored 24 points and Anthony Davis had 19 points, 11 rebounds and six blocked shots in Los Angeles' third straight victory.

LeBron James had 16 points and nine rebounds while playing only 23 minutes for the Lakers, who improved to 5-0 at home and 2-0 in NBA In-Season Tournament play with their first comfortable victory of the season. Russell hit six of the Lakers' 22 3-pointers, and Austin Reaves made four while scoring 16 points with 12 rebounds and seven assists.

Rui Hachimura scored 12 of his 23 points in the fourth quarter for Los Angeles, which hadn't won a game by more than six points before jumping to a 31-point lead over the short-handed Grizzlies in the second half and coasting home with James, Davis and Russell all sitting out the entire fourth quarter.

Santi Aldama scored a career-high 24 points for the Grizzlies, who lost two more players to injury while failing to follow up their surprise win over the Clippers on Sunday with their third victory of the season.

PELICANS 131, MAVERICKS 110

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Brandon Ingram and rookie Jordan Hawkins each scored 25 points, and New Orleans snapped a five-game skid with a win over Dallas, which committed 20 turnovers in the loss.

Zion Williamson scored 19 point and Herb Jones also had 19 with five steals and two blocks as New Orleans improved to 1-1 in West Conference Group B pool play.

Luka Doncic was not in his usual form. He scored 16 points, but missed 11 of 16 shots, turned the ball over eight times and was a minus-26 in 26 minutes on the court. Kyrie Irving and Tim Hardaway Jr. each scored 17 before coach Jason Kidd pulled all the starters for most of the final period.

HAWKS 126, PISTONS 120

DETROIT (AP)—Dejounte Murray had 32 points and nine assists as Atlanta extended Detroit's losing streak to nine games.

The Hawks won their Eastern Conference Group A tourney opener, while the Pistons fell to 0-2.

Saddiq Bey had 18 points against his former team and Bogdan Bogdanovic added 17 points for the Hawks. Trae Young missed the game after his wife gave birth to their second child on Monday.

Marvin Bagley III led the Pistons with 22 points and 10 rebounds. Rookie Ausar Thompson added 21.

NETS 124, MAGIC 104

NEW YORK (AP)—Spencer Dinwiddie had 29 points, eight assists and five rebounds, leading Brooklyn over Orlando.

Mikal Bridges chipped in 21 points, five rebounds and four assists, while Cam Johnson scored 20 points as Brooklyn put six players in double figures. Day'Ron Sharpe finished with 11 points and 10 rebounds as the Nets won their second straight overall and improved to 2-1 in the tournament.

The Nets will close their round-robin Group C slate with a home game against Toronto on Nov. 28.

Franz Wagner had 21 points, eight rebounds and five assists for the Magic in their tournament opener. Orlando fell to 4-16 all-time at Barclays Center.

THUNDER 123, SPURS 87

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—Shai Gilgeous-Alexander had 28 points and a career-high seven steals, and Oklahoma City rolled past San Antonio.

The game featured two of the league's top rookies — San Antonio's 7-foot-3 Victor Wembanyama and Oklahoma City's 7-1 Chet Holmgren. Wembanyama finished with eight points on 4-for-15 shooting. He grabbed 14 rebounds and blocked two shots. Holmgren had nine points on 3-for-10 shooting with seven rebounds and three assists.

Josh Giddey added 18 points, seven rebounds and seven assists for the Thunder, who earned their first tourney win in three tries and a record with 19 steals.

Zach Collins and Julian Champagnie had 13 points apiece for San Antonio. The Spurs lost their sixth straight and fell to 0-2 in the tournament.

JAZZ 115, TRAIL BLAZERS 99

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Jordan Clarkson scored 30 points and Lauri Markkanen added 21 points and nine rebounds as Utah dealt Portland its fourth straight loss.

John Collins had 14 points and 10 rebounds for the Jazz. Kelly Olynyk finished with 12 points and a season-high 12 rebounds. Keyonte George added 15 points and Collin Sexton 13. George and Sexton each had seven assists.

Utah won its second straight tournament game, while Portland slipped to 1-1 in West Group A play.

Jermani Grant led Portland with 26 points. Deandre Ayton added 22 points and 10 rebounds and Shaedon Sharpe finished with 17 points, eight rebounds and seven assists. Skylar Mays had a game-high 10 assists.

The Pacers are off to a fast start on the court and in the standings

By NOAH TRISTER
AP SPORTS WRITER

Indiana is setting quite a pace in the early going—which has meant plenty of scoring for both the Pacers and their opponents.

Coach Rick Carlisle's team is averaging an NBA-best 126 points per game while allowing 123.1. Indiana ranks second in the league in pace behind only Washington. So far this entertaining style is paying off in the standings, where the Pacers are tied for third in the Eastern Conference at 6-4.

Tyrese Haliburton leads the team in scoring at 23.8 ppg, but six other Indiana players are also averaging in double figures.

"We have to do it as a complete team," Carlisle said recently. "Ty is our All-Star, he's our leader, but we are a group that really heavily relies on one another."

Indiana has missed the playoffs the past three seasons, but the Pacers are coming off a 35-47 showing that was a 10-win improvement over 2021-22. What's stood out about this season so far isn't so much their record but the way they've compiled it.

Already, the Pacers have:

1. Scored 143 points in a win over Washington to start the season, a franchise record for an opener.

2. Allowed 155 points in a 51-point loss to Boston on Nov. 1. The Celtics hadn't scored that much in a regular-season game since 1959.

3. Scored 50 points in the third quarter but lost 125-124 to Charlotte on Nov. 4.

4. Scored 152 points in a 41-point victory over San Antonio last Monday, the 900th career win for Carlisle.

5. Allowed 54 points to Giannis Antetokounmpo but still beat Milwaukee 126-124 on Thursday night.

6. Allowed 50 points to Tyrese Maxey in a 137-126 loss to Philadelphia on Sunday night.

Indiana became only the third team in the past 60 years to allow a 50-point scorer in back-to-back games, according to Sportradar. The New York Knicks gave up 61 to Kobe Bryant and 52 to LeBron James in 2009, and the Orlando Magic allowed 60 to Kyrie Irving and 51 to Saddiq Bey in 2022.

The Pacers have to face the 76ers again Tuesday night and will try to avoid being on the wrong end of another 50-point performance. Or maybe an Indiana player will have one. The Pacers' high-scoring ways are not just a result of playing fast. They are also second in the league in field-goal percentage and second in 3-point percentage.

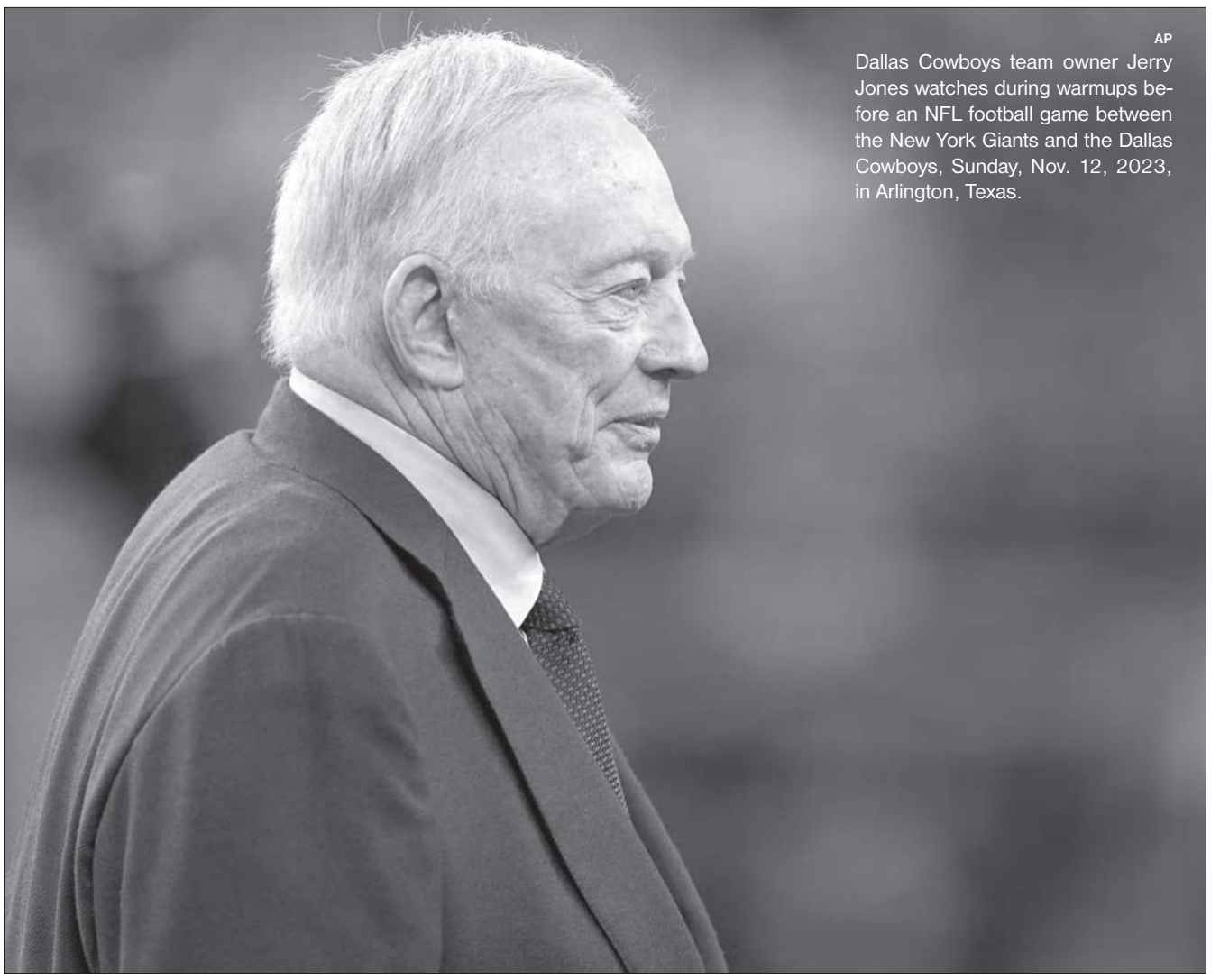
Indiana gave Haliburton a max deal in the offseason that goes through 2028-29. The 23-year-old guard is playing like a franchise centerpiece, averaging an NBA-high 12.2 assists to go along with his scoring. He had 17 against Philadelphia in a losing effort.

"I thought the first half we were playing a little slow and let them control the pace of the game," he said. "Going into the second half, we really dominated the pace and made them play up and down, which they don't want to do as much as we do."

Bruce Brown, signed away from defending champion Denver, is averaging 11 points and a career-high 31.1 minutes. Myles Turner is providing his usual combination of scoring, rebounding and shot-blocking, and Buddy Hield adds outside shooting off the bench.

It remains to be seen if the Pacers can stay anywhere close to the top of the conference, but if their first 10 games are any indication, it will be exciting to watch them try.

Cowboys owner Jerry Jones still loves spotlight in his 80s



AP

Dallas Cowboys team owner Jerry Jones watches during warmups before an NFL football game between the New York Giants and the Dallas Cowboys, Sunday, Nov. 12, 2023, in Arlington, Texas.

FRISCO, Texas (AP)—Jerry Jones wandered over to where reporters were gathered to watch a recent Dallas Cowboys practice, ready for an impromptu question-and-answer session.

The high-profile owner was still going when the closed portion of practice began, and jokingly pleaded for five more minutes when the assembled media were told it was time to leave.

Then Jones pointed to one of the buildings that surround three sides of the outdoor practice fields at the team's headquarters about 30 miles north of Dallas and said, with a wry smile, "Let's go up there for 30 minutes, and I'll tell it all."

Jones, also the team's president and general manager, went through his first training camp as an octogenarian this past summer, and has since turned 81.

The former Arkansas oilman relishes the spotlight the same way he did when he bought the club almost 34 years ago, and despite several recent episodes—some involving the team, others his personal life—that would make plenty of people in his position cringe in front of the cameras.

"I go real quick to the good parts, the blessings and the things that are good," Jones said while addressing one of those issues after the Cowboys' home opener in September.

"So when those bumps come, first of all, you know this—everybody standing here knows this—if I complain over two seconds, y'all need to run because lightning is going to strike me. I've had it too good. I can't complain at all."

A cascade of issues started in February 2022 with an ESPN report that the Cowboys paid four members of the team's famous cheerleading squad a total of $2.4 million to settle claims that then-public relations director Rich Dalrymple watched the women undress in their locker room during an event at AT&T Stadium.

Dalrymple, who joined the Cowboys soon after Jones bought the team in 1989 and was one of his closest confidants, retired shortly before ESPN's report, and denied the allegations.

A month later came a lawsuit from a woman in her 20s claiming Jones was her biological father, a case that is now centered around whether Jones will have to take a paternity test.

That difficult offseason was capped by Jones being involved in a traffic accident that wasn't his fault near downtown Dallas, but landed him in a hospital. He wasn't seriously hurt.

Since then, Jones' standing as one of the most powerful men in an overwhelmingly white—and aging—group of male NFL owners faced scrutiny over issues of race and diversity.

The Washington Post published a photo of Jones as a teenager in 1957 in a crowd of white students confronting Black students outside North Little Rock High School in Arkansas at the height of issues of civil rights and school desegregation. Jones said he was a "curious kid," not part of a group trying to block access for the Black students.

The photo was the catalyst for a story over Jones' role in diversity and inclusion in the NFL. The Cowboys have never had a Black head coach, but one of their top personnel executives, Will McClay, is Black.

Less than a year later, a former NFL Network reporter claimed in a discrimination lawsuit against the league that Jones made racially insensitive remarks to him. Jones has said his comments were misrepresented.

Through it all, Jones, who is also facing a civil lawsuit over claims of sexual assault, never shrank from the spotlight.

At an owners meeting during the tumult of 2022, he overruled a member of his PR staff trying to deflect questions, saying reporters hadn't had a chance to ask about the multitude of issues that had come up.

Jones did his usual opening news conference at training camp a few months later, a two-fold extravaganza that starts on a stage and ends with him taking more questions surrounded by reporters.

While he doesn't talk to reporters after as many road games as he once did, Jones always emerges from the locker room after home games for sessions that often last at least 20 minutes.

Oh, and he goes on the radio twice a week during the season.

"I've often said that just getting to a part of this thing, the NFL, the Cowboys, be around these guys, be around you, I've often said that made me something I wouldn't have been had I not been here," Jones said at training camp in July. "I'm proud that I'm as excited, and I've got the health to be that way."

Stephen Jones, the oldest of Jerry Jones' three children and the chief operating officer and executive vice president of personnel, said the family has discussed a succession plan, though the 59-year-old has often said he can't stand the topic. And he doesn't want to discuss what that plan is.

"That's not a good subject," Stephen Jones said. "Everybody's at peace, and we know how it works."

A decade ago, Jones smiled wide while saying a doctor told him he had the brain of a 40-year-old. A couple of years later, he was slowed by a double hip replacement right around the start of the season but kept with his training camp routine and didn't miss a game.

Jones has long been criticized as a meddling owner whose personnel decisions are a big part of the reason a franchise that has won five Super Bowls, including three in his first seven seasons, hasn't even been to an NFC championship game in 28 years.

He has never apologized for being heavily involved, and pleads his case that he's a good listener.

"Whether I act like it or not, I don't believe anybody's under me," Jones said. "We're all emptying our bucket. And so all we have to give is what's in our bucket. As long as everybody is emptying their bucket, we're all equal."

Mike McCarthy, the eighth head coach hired by Jones and now in his fourth season, has the rare distinction of leading two of the biggest brands in the NFL in the Cowboys and Green Bay Packers.

There are times McCarthy just shrugs and smiles—like when Jones reveals personnel decisions on his radio show—but a closer view of the ever-present owner has given him an appreciation for Jones.

"I think the opportunity to learn from someone with Jerry's knowledge and experience personally has been a huge benefit and asset and something I'm very thankful for," said McCarthy, who led the Packers to a Super Bowl title during the 2010 season.

Many give former coach Jimmy Johnson, who was hired when Jones bought the team and fired legendary coach Tom Landry, most of the credit for the three Super Bowl titles in the 1990s.

If the Cowboys can get another one, Jones will have a little more fodder for his counter-argument. For anyone wondering if he worries about running out of time, Jones says don't.

"It is a year-to-year thing with me," Jones said. "Immediate is if I don't let the old man in. Immediate is the next 10 years, let's say. So in the immediate 10 years, it's going to be month-to-month."

And with that typically convoluted answer, Jones was on to the next of several more questions after last weekend's win over the New York Giants.

Lamb was near receiving history with Cowboys blowing out Giants

FRISCO, Texas (AP)—CeeDee Lamb's chance at making NFL receiving history was news to Dallas offensive coordinator Brian Schottenheimer when the Cowboys were blowing out the New York Giants in the fourth quarter.

The coaching staff was sorting through lineup changes with a five-touchdown lead in Dallas' 49-17 victory Sunday when Schottenheimer got word that Lamb needed one catch and 8 yards receiving to become the first in league history with at least 10 catches and 150 yards in three consecutive games.

Cooper Rush already had replaced star quarterback Dak Prescott, and the coaches weren't going to reverse that move.

But Schottenheimer went to coach Mike McCarthy to see if he wanted to give Lamb a shot at an NFL first.

"That's got to come from the head coach," Schottenheimer said Monday. "And he's like, 'Let's do it.'"

The Cowboys made sure Rush was aware, and his first two plays were throws of 5 yards and 4 yards to Lamb, who finished with 11 catches for 151 yards with a receiving touchdown and a rushing score.

"Yes, it was brought to my attention," Lamb, who got another big day going with a spectacular one-handed grab, said after the game.

"No," he said when asked if the ball was going anywhere else when he returned to the game.

Lamb's run started with 12 catches for 158 yards and two touchdowns in a 43-20 victory over the Los Angeles Rams. He had a career high in yards for the second consecutive week with 191, on 11 catches, in a 28-23 loss to Philadelphia.

McCarthy said after the game that he didn't hesitate to put Lamb back in.

"How many times are you in a position like that?" McCarthy asked. "You feel worse as a coach if I walk in there and you ask me why the hell didn't you leave him out there for 9 yards. I've had it happen before. I think this league is so competitive, when you are in that position. I think it's the respect that you should show your player to accomplish that record."

McCarthy got his break as an NFL coach in Kansas City under the late Marty Schottenheimer—Brian Schottenheimer's dad.

"I've been around some coaches, probably my father would have been one to be like: 'Nah, we're good. We're not going to do that,'" Schottenheimer said. "CeeDee wanted to do it. We talked through it, and it made sense."

Schottenheimer, in his first year as Dallas' offensive coordinator with McCarthy calling plays after joining the staff last year as a consultant, got as big a kick out of the scene as anybody.

"I told CeeDee after the game, we were waiting for the clock to run down, I said, 'I hope they ask for your shoes in Canton because that's never happened,'" Schottenheimer said. "And he kind of looked at his shoes and said, 'These?'"

There was just one player kept out of the festivities.

"Dak actually wanted to go back in and do it," Schottenheimer said. "And we're like: 'Eh, we got this. Sit this one out.'"

Gunnar Henderson, Corbin Carroll unanimous Rookie of the Year winners

PHOENIX (AP)—Baltimore's Gunnar Henderson and Arizona's Corbin Carroll were the types of exciting players Major League Baseball hoped for when it tweaked its rules to encourage athleticism.

The young stars were rewarded Monday by being voted unanimous winners of the sport's Rookie of the Year awards.

Henderson won the American League honor and Carroll the National League award after they both used used power, speed and defense to help their teams reach the playoffs just two years after 110-loss seasons.

MLB made a series of rules changes during the offseason, including a pitch clock, bans on extreme infield defensive shifts and limits on the number of times a pitcher can disengage from the rubber. Henderson and Carroll were among several young players who took advantage of the emphasis on athleticism, providing value all over the field.

Some big-league players were skeptical of the rules changes before the season. Carroll and Henderson—who had played with them in the minors—embraced them.

AP

Baltimore Orioles' Gunnar Henderson runs the bases after hitting a home run against the New York Yankees during the fourth inning of a baseball game May 23, 2023, in New York.

"My perspective, having played with them, was just let people see," Carroll said. "I think people are going to enjoy it. I think this athletic brand of baseball is going to be good for the game. And it was."

It was just the fifth time both the AL and NL selections were unanimous, the first since the New York Yankees' Aaron Judge and the Los Angeles Dodgers' Cody Bellinger in 2017.

The 22-year-old Henderson split time between third base and shortstop, providing above-average defense at both spots, while batting .255 with 28 homers, 82 RBIs, 100 runs, 29 doubles and 10 stolen bases. The numbers were strikingly similar to Orioles Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr.'s first full season—another shortstop who won the award in 1982.

"I just tried to go out there and play as hard as I can," Henderson said. "And I felt like that showed."

Henderson received all 30 first-place votes and 150 points.

AP

Arizona Diamondbacks' Corbin Carroll, left, hits an RBI single against the Texas Rangers during the seventh inning in Game 2 of the baseball World Series, Oct. 28, 2023, in Arlington, Texas.

Cleveland pitcher Tanner Bibee was second with 20 second-place votes and 67 points. Boston slugger Triston Casas was third with 25 points.

Texas third baseman Josh Jung finished fourth while Houston catcher Yainer Diaz was fifth.

Carroll's season ended with a surprise appearance in the World Series, where the Diamondbacks fell to the Rangers in five games. The 23-year-old hit .285 with 25 homers and 54 stolen bases during the regular season, making the All-Star team and becoming the first rookie to join the 25-50 club.

The D-backs had been the last of the current 30 teams without a Rookie of the Year winner. He was pegged as a future star by the organization even before this season started, signing a $111 million, eight-year deal during spring training.

Mets pitcher Kodai Senga finished second with 22 second-place votes and 71 points. Dodgers outfielder James Outman was third, Colorado slugger Nolan Jones was fourth and Cincinnati infielder Matt McLain was fifth.

Henderson and Carroll both earned $750,000 from the pre-arbitration bonus pool for their wins. Bibee and Senga both get $500,000 for finishing in second.

The Baseball Writers' Association of American votes on its awards before the postseason begins.

Henderson and Carroll were part of a superb MLB rookie class—particularly for hitters. According to FanGraphs data, the advanced metric Wins Above Replacement total for all rookie hitters in 2023 (68.5) was the second-best since 1900, behind only the 2015 group (75.1) headlined by Kris Bryant, Francisco Lindor, Carlos Correa and others.

The Orioles and D-backs both get an extra selection after the first round of July's amateur draft, part the prospect promotion incentive added to the collective bargaining agreement that began last year. The provision was included to discourage teams from delaying arbitration and free-agent eligibility.

Bibee, 24, was 10-4 with a 2.98 ERA over 25 starts.

The 23-year-old Casas shook off a slow start to the season, hitting .263 with 24 homers. The 6-foot-5, 244-pounder was much better after the All-Star break, batting .317 with 15 homers and 38 RBIs, giving the Red Sox hope that they have a future star.

TEAM

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National University Kukkum.

Gross and company received a warm send-off from Team Marianas supporters at departure area of the Francisco C. Ada /Saipan International Airport with the Northern Marianas Sports Association Board leading the group's well-wishers.

"On behalf of the NMSA Board, I wish everyone good luck. I am confident you will also represent the NMI well in the Pacific Games. Enjoy the experience and make us proud," said NMSA president Jerry Tan.

Joining Tan in the airport send-off were NMSA vice president Ramon Tebuteb, general secretary Valerie Hofschneider, treasurer John Hirsh, and board member Alex Sablan. Families, friends, and supporters of the NMI athletes and officials were also part of the group that wished the team good luck yesterday morning.

"Sending-off my daughter (Riella Ann Billy Ichiuo) makes me remember the times I was part of Team Marianas and competed in the Pacific Games. It makes me want to go with the team right now and experience what it's like to compete at this level," said CNMI Sports Hall of Famer Tony Ichiuo, who represented the islands in athletics competition on many occasions.

His daughter is competing in weightlifting—the sport that has consistently given the NMI medals in regional competitions.

"I wish my daughter and all the NMI athletes good luck. I know it will be very hard competing at this high-level competition, but they have to remain confident and keep their focus. Focus on what they've been training and do not be worried of their competitors," said Ichiuo, who came to the airport with his wife, Rose.

The weightlifting competition will not take place until next week. The NMI tennis and football players will be the first ones to go for Team Marianas with the team tennis event slated to kick off this Friday. The NMI National Men's Football Team, on the other hand, will have its Pacific Games debut this Saturday, Nov. 18 against Fiji. Next up will be the NMI swimmers, who will have their first races on Nov. 20, a day after the opening ceremony on Nov. 19.

Beach volleyball is set from Nov. 28 to Dec. 2; bodybuilding is slated on Nov. 28; golf is from Nov. 22 to 25; triathlon is scheduled from Nov. 29 to Dec. 1; vaa is from Nov. 27 to Dec. 1; and weightlifting will run from Nov. 20 to Nov. 24.

Team Marianas is supported by Joeten Daidai Foundation, Triple J, Crowne Plaza Resort, IT&E, IP&E, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Mobil, Tan Holdings, and McDonald's of Guam & Saipan. ***(PR)***

ABEL

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ily, friends, and other tennis players on island.

"My dad was the person who got me started in tennis when I was very young. I also want to dedicate this to all the players here in Saipan who have found time to practice with me—Colin, Bobby [Cruz), LaHunn [Lam], Jun [Wang], Carol [Lee], Sean [Lee], Moris [Villanueva], and everyone else."

Abel, who also lived in Hawaii and California before calling Saipan home, advanced to the finals after defeating another CNMI national tennis player, Nason Wessel, 6-1, 6-1. Before that he beat national team alternate Simon Tang, 6-2, 6-1.

Ramsey edged Kevin Wang, 6-4, 7-5, in the second round following a bye in the first. He then took care of boys 18 champion and fourth seed David Kwon, 6-1, 6-4, in the semis.

In the men's singles 3.0, Jacky Chen overcame the challenge of Daniel Kang, 7-6 (4), 6-2, to win the championship. Chen advanced to the semis with a 6-2, 3-6, 10-7 tightrope win against Haoyang Song, while Kang made the finals following a 7-5, 6-6 (retired) win over Chris Zhu.

In the men's open doubles, national team members Wessel and June Yu went undefeated in two matches to claim the title. They first rallied to beat Seungwoo "Henry" Choi and Jonathan Jackson, 2-6, 6-0, 10-7, before winning it all following a masterful 6-4, 7-5 win over Ramsey and Jun Wang. Ramsey's original partner, Moris Villanueva, was a late scratch.

Bong Gamab and Ed Javier reigned supreme in the men's doubles 4.0 after beating Marlon Bercilla and J.R. Jacinto via walkover and Wataru Kodakura and David Kwon, 6-1, 6-4.

Results of the other men's divisions and men's age group division as well as the entire women's division will be published in tomorrow's issue of *Saipan Tribune.*

The 12th TanHoldings Classic would like to thank the following sponsors of the tournament: Grand Slam Sponsors Quality Distributor of Guam, Mobil Oil Marianas, ASC Trust, and TSL Foundation; Match Point Sponsors IT&E, D&Q, and Shirley's Guam, Ace Sponsors Alliance Metal Specialties and IShop; Advantage Sponsors Take Care and Tsang Brothers, and in-kind sponsors McDonalds of Guam & Saipan, All-Star dba Boarderline Athlete's Foot, and Marpac.

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have more athletes and will be tougher," said Wania.

The triathlete was part of the NMI Team that won the bronze medal in the aquathlon event, teaming up with Heather Brook, Kathy Ruszala, and Isaiah Aleksenko. With him doing the solo triathlon aquathlon and triathlon races, Wania was very realistic with his goal, which is to have a strong finish and complete the Olympic distance course in triathlon. He will race on Nov. 29 and 30.

"I love the Olympic distance course (1.5m swim, 40K bike, and 10K run), it suits me better. However, the challenge will be the swim part, which will be done in the pool. I trained in the open water here, but I did buoy swims to somehow get ready for the pool course in Solomons," said Wania.

Besides the NMI's lone entry to the triathlon and aquathlon events, the two competitions will also have athletes from Fiji, Guam, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Tahiti.

Wania and the rest of Team Marianas left for Solomons via charter flight yesterday morning. Team Marianas' participation in the 2023 Pacific Games is supported by Joeten Daidai Foundation, Triple J, Crowne Plaza Resort, IT&E, IP&E, Tan Siu Lin Foundation, Mobil, Tan Holdings, and McDonald's of Guam & Saipan. ***(PR)***

Pacers beat 76ers, end Philly's eight-game winning streak.

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Sports

Gunnar Henderson, Corbin Carroll unanimous Rookie of the Year winners.

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Team Marianas arrives in Solomons

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The first and second batch of NMI athletes and officials are joined in the photo by Northern Marianas Sports Association Board and their supporters before they boarded the charter flight to Honiara, the Solomon Islands yesterday morning.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Team Marianas has a total of 102 delegates to the 2023 Pacific Games with bulk of the traveling group boarding the Solomon Airlines charter flight yesterday morning.

Team Marianas arrived in Honiara, the Solomon Islands yesterday afternoon after leaving Saipan earlier in the morning via charter flight and will spend the next few days preparing for their respective competitions in the 2023 Pacific Games.

Team Marianas chef de mission Nick Gross led the Northern Mariana Islands delegation, which includes athletes and officials from athletics, beach volleyball, bodybuilding, football, golf, swimming tennis, triathlon, va'a, and weightlifting. Team Marianas has a total of 102 delegates to the 2023 Pacific Games and bulk of the traveling group boarded the Solomon Airlines charter flight yesterday morning, while the rest of the squad will go to Honiara via commercial flight later this week.

"This is it. Our athletes and officials will be working hard in the next two weeks to represent the Northern Mariana Islands well," said Gross before departing for Honiara. Gross met with the Pacific Games organizers last night for the delegation registration meeting, as the rest of Team Marianas settled in at their designated Athletes Village—the Solomon Islands

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Long wait over for NMI triathlete

After more than 20 years, Leo Wania gets to compete in the Pacific Games, again.

"The last time I participated in the Pacific Games was in 1999 when the event was hosted in Guam," said Wania, who represented the NMI in the athletics competition of the then known as the 1999 South Pacific Games.

Wania raced in the 1,500 in the 11th edition of the quadrennial event when he just graduated from high school at the Marianas High School. This year or after more than two decades, Wania is back at the Pacific Games stage and this time will join the triathlon competition as the lone entry of the NMI to the event.

"I am so excited to be competing again in the Pacific Games in a different event. I joined the Pacific Mini Games last year on Saipan, but I know the competition in Solomons for the Pacific Games will

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Abel wins first-ever men's open title

By **MARK RABAGO**
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EDITOR

Thomas Abel won his first career men's open title after overcoming No. 1 seed Colin Ramsey in the finals of the 12th TanHoldings Tennis Classic last Sunday at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan tennis courts.

The 44-year-old former tennis player at California State University in Los Angeles beat the defending champion and CNMI national player in a very competitive and highly entertaining match, 6-4, 2-6, 10-6.

Abel, who was born in Slovakia, joked that he finally figured out the wind and that's why he won the finals against Ramsey.

"I practice with Colin a lot and he's a great tennis player with very few weaknesses, so the main strategy is to keep the ball in play and hope for an opening that I could attack from. Fortunately, it worked out this time, but the conditions were challenging for both of us."

Abel said winning his first-ever men's open championship on Saipan—against an opponent he lost in the finals in many occasions—was great but what made it sweeter is he entered the tournament as the third seed.

"It's a good feeling, of course. In any given tournament, I would say anyone from the seeded players can beat anyone else on a given day. Higher seeds carry higher expectations with them, so that can sometimes add pressure. Someone once said that pressure is only for tires, so I remind myself of that often."

The championship is also a culmination of Abel's personal renaissance in the sport.

"I started when I was 4 years old, played throughout high school, college, and then some challenger and satellite tournaments on the mainland. I only played sporadically in the last decade, and only restarted more seriously in the CNMI, thanks to the wonderful tennis community here."

He then dedicated his TanHoldings men's open championship to his fam-

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